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THE KIEVAN NEOCLASSICISTS

By

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

September, 1964

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Kievan Neoclassicists" submitted by Danylo Swjatoslaw Struk in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

THE KIEVAN NEOCLASSICISTS

(An Abstract and an Introduction)

The Kievan Neoclassicists played a very important role in the cultural renaissance of the Ukrainian nation. The small group of scholar-poets whom their opponents called "Neoclassicists," provides the main subject of focus in this thesis. One hopes that through this focus the significance of this group in the development of modern Ukrainian literature will become apparent. For although the Neoclassicists were not the most boisterous organization in the decade of literary organizations, and, in fact, comprised no organization at all, their contribution to the cultural revival of the nineteen twenties is considered of utmost importance for the further development of Ukrainian literature. The five poets, Mykola Zerov, Maksym Ryl's'kyj, Pavlo Fylypovyč, Myxajlo Draj-Xmara, and Oswald Burghardt (later known as Jurij Klen), were united by one common goal: to instill in Ukrainian literature the immortal heritage of world literatures. Although they represented various literary styles, they adhered jointly to a high standard of versification and shared an admiration for the Graeco-Roman masters and for their own predecessors, the French Parnassians. Their chief representative and maître was Mykola Zerov, around whom the group of poet-friends centered, and whose translations of the Roman, French and other poets were, perhaps, the primary reason for the name "Neoclassicists" which the group accepted.

In the belief that a study of the Kievan Neoclassicists is imperative for a better understanding of contemporary Ukrainian literature, this thesis presents the following discourse on the Neoclassicists. In it are discussed the reasons for the appearance of the Neoclassicists, their historical position in Ukrainian literature, their biographies, their predecessors and idols in Ukrainian and West European literatures, their aims and goals. The achievements of the Neoclassicists are examined by presenting examples of their work in the light of common neoclassical features.¹ Moreover, the position of the Ukrainian Neoclassicists in relation to the Russian Neoclassicists and Acmeists is clarified to indicate that the two movements had very little in common. The discourse ends with a summary explaining the important role that the Neoclassicists played in the famous Literary Discussion of 1925-1928 on the losing but glorious side of Mykola Xvyl'ovyj.

1. The AATSEEL transliteration is used in the quotation of poems and throughout the thesis. All titles of works or poems are given in transliteration unless there already exists an established title of the respective work in English. All names of Slavic authors are given in the AATSEEL transliteration unless the author's name appears in an English source where some other transliteration is used. All proper place names are given in transliteration with the exception of Kiev which appears throughout in the Anglicized form based on the Russian spelling of the Ukrainian city Kyjiv. All quotations of prose and poetry taken from Ukrainian sources are translated by the author of the thesis. Exceptions are indicated in the footnotes.

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUNDS

Historical background

The group of poets commonly referred to as the Kievan Neoclassicists was partly a product of an age and as such it must be examined against the historical background of that age. The Russian Revolution of 1917 destroyed the Tsarist Empire which had been the political oppressor and cultural dominator of Ukraine for more than two hundred years. The spirit of revolution spread to all parts of the former empire, but "while in Russia the Revolution of 1917 had a social and political character, in the Ukraine it was fought primarily as a war for national liberation. The revolutionary forces in the Ukraine were not Communist but primarily national."¹ The revolution in Ukraine achieved its aims and Ukraine experienced a brief period of independence from 1918 to 1920.

The Russian Communists realized, however, that political control of Ukraine was an absolute necessity for the preservation and development of their new Soviet state. The nascent Ukrainian National Republic, weakened by internal disagreements and lacking

1. George S. N. Luckyj, Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917-1934 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 5.

foreign support, could not withstand the attacking Soviet armies. The Bolsheviks, after their third invasion, seized control of the country. The brief independence which Ukraine experienced, however, unleashed the nation's pent-up spirit and produced such a colossal rebirth of national awareness that the Bolshevik conquerors, in order to maintain their power, were forced to cater to it. Therefore, under Lenin's theory of self-determination of nations,² a period of Ukrainization was instituted, which resulted in a phase of intensified activity in the realm of Ukrainian culture, art, and literature.

Although Ukraine's independence was very brief, the cultural revival which it initiated expanded under the protection of the right of self-determination. This period of Ukrainization lasted

2. In relation to art, culture, and literature, the principle of the self-determination of nations affirmed the independence of Ukrainian SSR in a federal union with Russian SFSR and stated that: "In view of the fact that Ukrainian culture (language, schools, etc.) has been suppressed for centuries by tsardom and by the exploiter classes of Russia, the Central Committee of the RCP(B) calls upon all members of the Party to facilitate in every way the removal of obstacles to the free development of the Ukrainian language and culture. Since, among the backward sections of the Ukrainian masses, nationalist tendencies may be observed as a result of a century-long oppression, the members of the RCP(B) should treat them with the utmost patience and tact, counteracting these tendencies with a friendly explanation of the identity of interests of the toiling masses of the Ukraine and Russia. The members of the RCP(B) should foil any attempts to reduce the Ukrainian language to a secondary place and they should strive, on the contrary, to transform the Ukrainian language into the weapon of Communist education of the masses. It is essential that there should be enough officials in the Soviet administration who know Ukrainian, and in the future all officials should be familiar with the use of Ukrainian..." Quoted from B. Borev, Nacional'ne pytannja: Kurs nacional'noho pytannja dlja komvyšiv ta radpartskil (Xarkiv: Deržavne vydavnytstvo Proletar, 1931), p. 88, quoted in Luckyj, Literary Politics..., p. 17.

for about ten years and in that time produced astonishing results. In the realm of literature, the almost moribund Ukrainian literary activity arose, as if overnight, and placed Ukrainian literature at a height scarcely imaginable twenty years before. Writers appeared by the hundreds and formed literary groups. Influenced by European literary currents of the second half of the nineteenth century and by the poets and theoreticians of the pre-revolutionary Silver Age of Poetry in Russia, groups of Ukrainian Symbolists, Futurists, and Pan-Futurists appeared proclaiming their ideas about art and literature. Besides these groups which differed primarily on aesthetic grounds, there appeared organizations of writers differing politically. As if in some weird chemical reaction, writers joined together, formed an organization, quarrelled, split, reformed into a larger, more "all-embracing" organization. In the nine years of this literary revival rose and fell such organizations as "Hrono," "Aspis," "Lanka," "Hart," "Pluh," "Aspanfut," "Molodnjak," "Vaplite," and "VUSPP." Slightly different aesthetic or political orientation or dissimilar "pre-revolutionary background" were criteria for a new group, a new organization, with its own manifesto and publications. Mass literature was the motto of the day, and membership in an organization of writers was virtually a necessity. Being a member of a group soon became more important than the possession of literary talent.

If you belong to a given group, you will be considered right.... You have a patent for truth. ... Belonging

to a group is the criterion for truth...³

At first the unusual freedom of activity and later Party directives encouraged this "groupishness". While the Party was still occupied with raising the political awareness of its own ranks, it could not devote due attention to literature, but it never ignored it entirely. Since the Party realized the propaganda value of literature it understood that sooner or later it would be obliged to seize full control of all literary activity. Therefore, it encouraged the formation of various groups, for this was an ideal way to have the writers sort themselves to find those who in due time would be capable of accepting the Party's conception of proletarian literature.

The Party watched, therefore, as every group proclaimed its "criterion for truth". The CP(B)U, under the directives from Moscow, however, soon made it clear that there was only one version of truth, and torrents of mutual denunciations followed as every literary organization fought for the Party's recognition, i.e., for the universal establishment of "their" truth. Each group offered its own formula for the union of art and ideology, for the creation of a Soviet literature in content and form. Perhaps the belief that the stronger the organization in numbers the more acceptable its truth led to the acceptance into the ranks of all who wanted to support a given "platform", regardless of their

3. M. Zerov in a speech given at the Kievan Literary Dispute on May 24, 1925. The whole speech is quoted by A. Lejtes and M. Jašek, Desjat' rokiv ukrajins'koji literatury (1917-1927) (Xarkiv: Deržavne vydavnyctvo Ukraïny, 1928-1930), vol. II, pp. 184-188.

literary merit.

The height of this internal strife was reached in the famous Literary Discussion which formally began in 1925. During The Literary Discussion the Ukrainian writers divided themselves basically into two main camps: in one were those critical of the contemporary lack of standards and in the other those who, through party directives, accused the former of a desire to imitate and reestablish the previous bourgeois standard in society, culture, and art. By 1928 The Literary Discussion ended and the Party faction triumphed. The result was a gradual and steady liquidation of Ukrainization and of prominent Ukrainian writers - sometimes, regardless of the faction to which they had belonged.⁴

During this literary furor, when literature was dying from fruitless over-activity, a group of poets dared to overlook the revolutionary times, dared to speak not in a group but independently of all groups about the necessity of maintaining literature on an appropriately elevated level. They insisted on quality of literature rather than quantity, and their own works reflected the erudite tranquillity of the classics, not the tempo of their day. Svjatoslav Hordyns'kyj aptly compared the appearance of the Ukrainian Neoclassicists with a similar situation in France after the French Revolution:

Guillotines on the squares, shouts of the tribunes
of the people, smoke over the Bastille, and on this

4. For further information on Ukrainian writers who were suppressed or liquidated see: Yar Slavutych, Moderna ukrajins'ka poezija, 1900-1950 (Philadelphia: Ameryka, 1950), pp. 10-11; Yar Slavutych, The Muse in Prison (Jersey City: Svoboda, 1956), pp. 16-20; and Luckyj, Literary Politics..., pp. 235-236.

background arise Chénier's classically developed elegies and Davide's strict academic art. There is, it seems, a somewhat deeper string in man's nature; a string which vibrates during chaos and calls to order, to quietude and equilibrium. In the same way, during the violent years of young Ukraine, born on the bloody battlefield, a new form in art began to appear, which wanted to express those forces capable of bringing the chaos of the steppe under control.⁵

Their adversaries, i.e., the propagators of proletarian mass art, called these poets the "Neoclassicists." This name described them well and they even accepted it, though more jestingly than seriously, and wrote a "Neoclassical March," a mild parody on themselves.⁶ They formed no official literary organization, proclaimed no manifesto, accepted no members, yet recognized all poets who wrote what, in their opinion, was good and polished verse. Another name for the Neoclassicists can be best derived from a sonnet written by one of them. The sonnet "Swans" proved to be the start of the persecution of Draž-Xmara, but, nevertheless, in it he addressed his companions as "The Fivefold Cluster of Unvanquished Bards":

Oh, fivefold cluster of unvanquished bards!
Through storms ring songs of your unconquered hearts,
And break the ice of fear and doubt.
Rise, swans, from slavery, from nonexistence
And let the shining stars of Lyre lead you out
Where oceans foam with waves of life's insistence.⁷

Although Draž-Xmara defended himself from the accusations of Soviet critics by claiming that the poem referred to the Abbaye

5. Svjatoslav Hordyns'kyj, ed., "Poezija Mykoly Zerova," an introduction to Mykola Zerov, Kamena (L'viv: Ukrajin's'ke vydavnyctvo, 1943), p. 8.

6. The "Neoclassical March" is given in full in Jurij Klen, Ivory (Toronto: Jurij Klen Foundation, 1957), vol. III, pp. 135-141.

7. The original is given in Klen, Ivory, vol. III, p. 153.

group of French poets who "broke the ice of despair, in which the dark genius of Mallarmé⁸ was concealed,"⁸ no one believed him and every one saw in the "fivefold cluster" the five Neoclassicists: Mykola Zerov, Pavlo Fylypovyč, Maksym Ryl's'kyj, Oswald Burghardt (later Jurij Klen), and Myxajlo Draj-Xmara himself.

Biographical background

MYKOLA ZEROV

Mykola Zerov⁹ was born on April 26, 1890, in Zin'kiv in the Poltava District, the son of a school teacher. From elementary school in Zin'kiv, Zerov went to the Gymnasium of Oxyrka in the Xarkiv District. In 1903 he transferred to the First Gymnasium of Kiev where he matriculated in 1908. He then attended the University of Kiev and majored in the Faculty of History and Philology. After completing the University he taught in the Gymnasium of Zlatopil'. In 1917 he began teaching in the Second Gymnasium of Kiev. During the twenties he held the chair of Ukrainian Literature in KINO (Kyjivs'kyj Instytut Narodn'oji Osvity - Kievan Institute of Peoples Education), the temporary Soviet name for the University of Kiev.

He began publishing in 1912 in the magazine Svitlo (Light) and in 1913 started to work for the newspaper Rada (Council).

8. Svjatoslav Hordynsky, "The Fivefold Cluster of Unvanquished Bards," Ukrainian Quarterly, vol. V (Summer, 1949), p. 249.

9. The primary sources used for the biography of Zerov are: Jurij Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrozdžennja (Paris: Instytut literacki, 1959), pp. 122-123; Lejtes and Jasek, Desjat' rokiv..., vol. I, pp. ??? ; and M. Orest, ed., Bezsmertni, zbirnyk spohadiv pro M. Zerova, P. Fylypovyča i M. Draj-Xmaru (Munich: Instytut literatury im. Myxajla Oresta, 1963).

From 1919 to 1920 he edited the magazine Knyhar (Book-seller). During his life only six of his major works appeared in print: Antolohija rymy's'koji poeziji (Anthology of Roman Poetry), 1920; a collection of original poems Kamena (The Muses), 1924 and 1943; a historical survey of literature, Nove ukrajins'ke pys'menstvo (The New Ukrainian Literature), 1924; a monograph, Lesja Ukrajinka, 1924; a collection of essays of literary criticism, Do dŷerel (To the Sources), 1926; and a study of modern Ukrainian literature, Vid Kuliša do Vynnyčenko (From Kuliš to Vynnyčenko), 1929.

The Soviet attack on Ukrainian culture and its exponents, the intelligentsia, also reached Zerov. After constant persecutions by Soviet critics and agitation against him by Comsomol students, Zerov was asked to resign from his university position. He left the University in 1934 and thus lost his means of livelihood. As if this alone were not enough, toward the end of 1934 Zerov's only son died at the age of ten. Zerov could not find work in Ukraine and in 1935 was forced to seek employment in Moscow. In the spring of 1935 he was arrested by the NKVD and sent to a concentration camp for "being the head of a terrorist and counter-revolutionary organization." He was last heard of in 1937 on the Solovki Islands.¹⁰ It is assumed that he died in the mass executions that secretly took

¹⁰. Semen Pidhajnyj, Ukrajins'ka inteligencija na Solovkax (Ulm: Prometej, 1947), p. 78. However, Jurij Luc'kyj, ed., Lehkosynja dal' --- vaplitjans'kyj zbirnyk (New York: Proloh, 1963), p. 146, gives 1942 as the year of Zerov's death, whereas Ukrajins'ka radjans'ka encyklopedija, vol. V, p. 277, lists Oct. 13, 1941, as the date of his death. The unavailability of sources and the mystery which envelops everyone who was sent to the concentration camps in the Soviet Union do not permit verification of dates. One can, therefore, only surmise and approximate from hearsay.

place in the concentration camps of the USSR.¹¹

Thanks to the untiring efforts of Zerov's brother, Myxajlo Orest, all the works of Zerov that could be collected appeared in three émigré publications: Sonnetarium, Catalepton, and Corollarium;¹² these contain his poems and translations as well as letters and reviews. His scholarly works about Ukrainian literature were also republished by Ukrainian scholars outside of Soviet Ukraine.¹³

PAVLO FYLYPOVYČ^V

The second Neoclassicist, Pavlo Fylypovyč^V,¹⁴ was born on August 20, 1891, in the village Kastanivka where his father was a priest. Fylypovyč^V was an excellent student; after attending the Gymnasium of Zlatopil' for four years, he won a scholarship to the very selective Halahan College in Kiev, which was run on the model of English colleges. From here stemmed his proficient knowledge of French.

11. Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrodžennja, p. 124.

12. Sonnetarium was published in Berchtesgaden by Orlyk publishers in 1948, Catalepton in 1951 by Kyjiv publishers in Philadelphia, and Corollarium in 1958 by Instytut literatury in Munich.

13. Do džerel was republished in 1943 by Ukraïns'ke vydavnyctvo in L'viv, and Nove Ukraïns'ke pys'menstvo in 1960 by Instytut literatury in Munich.

14. Biographical data on Fylypovyč^V was taken primarily from the following sources: P. Fylypovyč, Poeziji (Munich: Instytut literaturoznavstva pry Ukraïns'komu vil'nomu universytetovi, 1957), the introduction; Orest, ed., Bezsmertni...; and Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrodžennja, pp. 202-204.

After matriculating from college he entered the Faculty of History and Philology at the University of Kiev. He graduated in 1915 and remained with the University as a teaching assistant. From 1920 to the day of his arrest in 1935 he was a professor of modern Ukrainian literature at the University of Kiev.

In college he began writing poetry and started publishing in 1910. His first poems, written in Russian under the pseudonym Zorev, appeared in the Moscow and St. Petersburg journals Žatva (Harvest), Zavety (Behests), Vestnik Evropy (Courier of Europe). After the Revolution he began writing in Ukrainian, and his first Ukrainian poems appeared in the symbolist magazine Muzahet in 1919.

Only two collections of poems appeared during Fylypovyč's lifetime: Zemlja i viter (Earth and Wind), 1922, and Prostir (Space), 1925. Both collections were republished by émigrés in one edition of Poems, 1957. Fylypovyč, like Zerov, devoted much of his time to literary criticism and scholarship. Two excellent works in the realm of the latter appeared in print: Z novitn'oho ukrajins'koho pys'menstva (From New Ukrainian Literature), 1929, and Ševčenko i joho doba (Shevchenko and His Era), 1925. Fylypovyč, moreover, edited several editions of the Ukrainian classical writers (Ivan Franko, Lesja Ukrajinka, and others) for which he wrote his excellent introductory essays. Superb essays and reviews, which appeared in the periodical literature of the time, complete his brilliant literary output, which was ended prematurely by his arrest.

He was sentenced to ten years of forced labor and sent to the concentration camps on Solovki.¹⁵ There all trace of him

15. Pidhajnyj, Ukrajins'ka inteligencija na Solovkax, p. 79.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the system (1) has solutions for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β if and only if the conditions (2) are satisfied. The second part of the paper is devoted to a detailed study of the properties of the solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are unique and depend continuously on the parameters α and β . The third part of the paper is devoted to a study of the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system (1) for large values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) approach a certain limit as the parameters α and β approach infinity. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the stability properties of the solutions of the system (1). It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are stable with respect to the parameters α and β . The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the solutions of the system (1) for small values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) approach a certain limit as the parameters α and β approach zero. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are unique and depend continuously on the parameters α and β . The seventh part of the paper is devoted to a study of the asymptotic properties of the solutions of the system (1) for large values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) approach a certain limit as the parameters α and β approach infinity. The eighth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the stability properties of the solutions of the system (1). It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are stable with respect to the parameters α and β . The ninth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the solutions of the system (1) for small values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) approach a certain limit as the parameters α and β approach zero. The tenth part of the paper is devoted to a study of the properties of the solutions of the system (1) for arbitrary values of the parameters α and β . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are unique and depend continuously on the parameters α and β .

disappeared in 1937. Rumor has it that his case was reviewed and that he received another ten years. His wife became mentally deranged after his arrest and went to the NKVD with a request to be sent to her husband. The NKVD complied only partially and gave her five years of forced labor in the concentration camps of Karaganda.¹⁶

MAKSYM RYL'S'KYJ

Perhaps the greatest poet of the group, Maksym Ryl's'kyj¹⁷ was born on March 20, 1895, in Kiev. His father, a member of the (petty) gentry, was well known as a leader of the "Xlopoman" movement (peasant-mania)¹⁸ in Ukraine. Ryl's'kyj studied in the Naumenko Gymnasium in Kiev, and after graduation in 1915 entered the Faculty of Medicine at the University of St. Volodymyr in Kiev, and later

16. Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrodžennja, p. 204.

17. Biographical data on Ryl's'kyj was taken primarily from the following sources: Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrodžennja, pp. 60-64; S.A. Kryžanivs'kyj, Maksym Ryl's'kyj --- 50-t' rokiv tvorčoji dijal'nosti (Kiev: Deržavne vydavnytstvo xudožn'oji literatury [henceforth abbreviated to Dvxl.], 1960); and Maksym Ryl's'kyj, Tvory v desjaty tomax (Kiev: Dvxl., 1960), vol. I, pp. 1-56.

18. "In the sixties of the nineteenth century in Kiev there arose a lively movement known under the name xlopomanija [peasant-mania]. Polish aristocrats and Muscovite publicists referred with derision to young idealists, students of the University of Kiev, who worked with great enthusiasm for the good of the Ukrainian populace, as xlopomany.... An important role in this movement was played by Tadej Ryl's'kyj [father of Maksym Ryl's'kyj], Their primary activity consisted of spreading education among the people, of forming 'Sunday' schools, and of publishing 'metelyky' (Butterflies) [little booklets] for the people's needs." Quoted from V. Radzykevych, Istorija ukrajins'koji literatury (Detroit: Bat'kivščyna, 1955), vol. II, p. 102.

he transferred to the Faculty of Philology. The Revolution and the Civil War interrupted his studies and he never completed his university education. After the War he started to teach.

Ryl's'kyj began writing very early, and at the age of sixteen he published his first collection of poetry: Na bilyx ostrovax (On the White Islands), 1910. Even before this, he already had some of his poems printed in the newspaper Ukrajins'ka xata (Ukrainian House). He continued to write for several magazines, e.g., Literaturno-naukovyj visnyk (Literary-Scientific Herald), Zasiv (Seed), Červonyj Šljax (Red Road), while simultaneously publishing more collections of poems. About twenty-five books of poetry and approximately two hundred and fifty thousand lines of translated works are the fruit of his long creative life.¹⁹ His early works, marked by neoromantic and neoclassical motifs, are perhaps his best, for they reflect a poetical creativity not bound by political hymnology demanded by the regime. The "poetic pearl"²⁰ of this period is his book Synja dalečyn' (The Blue Remoteness), 1922, which was preceded by the idyl "Na uzlissi" (On the Outskirts of a Forest), 1918, and the collection of poems, Pid osinnimy zorjamy (Under the Autumn Stars), 1918. Also belonging to his early period are Kriz' burju i snih (Through Storm and Snow), 1925, Trynadcjata vesna (The Thirteenth Spring), 1926, De sxodjat'sja dorohy (Where the Roads Meet), 1929, and Homin i vidhomin (Din and Echo), 1929.

19. Ryl's'kyj, Tvory, vol. I, p. 8.

20. Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrodžennja, p. 61.

In 1931 Ryl's'kyj was arrested by the NKVD. Apparently, while in prison, he was faced with the choice of the Ukrainian writers and intelligentsia at the time, i.e., to die or to live as a "poet of the republic." Ryl's'kyj chose the latter course. In 1932 appeared his first "new" collection of poems, Znak tereziv (The Sign of the Scales), in which the poem "Dekljaracija obov'jazkiv poeta j hromadjanyna" (The Declaration of Duties of the Poet and Citizen) states clearly the poet's newly adopted outlook and marks the despicable, though understandable, choice of the poet to become a panegyrist of Stalin and the Communist Party. For this choice Ryl's'kyj was properly rewarded. He became the "representative father" of Soviet Ukrainian poetry. In 1950 he was awarded the Stalin Prize for his masterful translation of Mickiewicz's Pan Tadeusz and this was followed by the Lenin Prize for his own poetry. In 1958 Ryl's'kyj was elected to the Academy of Arts of Ukr. S. S. R. and of U. S. S. R. He presided over Soviet Ukrainian literature as its "White Father" and mentor until his recent death on July 24, 1964.

OSWALD BURGHARDT (JURIJ KLEN)

Oswald Burghardt,²¹ the only one of the Neoclassicists who emigrated, was born of German colonial extraction in 1891 in the village Serbynivci of the Podillja District. He studied first in a gymnasium in Nemyriv, and later in Kiev. After graduation from

21. Biographical data on Burghardt (Klen) was taken primarily from the following sources: S. Hordynsky, "The Fivefold Cluster of Unvanquished Bards," p. 258; and V. Radzykevyc, Ukrajins'ka literatura XX stolittja (Philadelphia: Ameryka, 1925), pp. 98-99.

the university, Burghardt, being of German origin, was exiled prior to the First World War to a town near Murmansk. After the war he returned to Kiev but could not endure the famine, and moved, together with Zerov, to Baryshivka where both of them taught and where the neoclassical "group" had its beginnings.

In 1933 he managed to escape from the Soviet Union. He lectured on Slavic literatures at the University of Münster, and later at the University of Prague. In 1947 he "died of starvation as a refugee in Germany."²²

While Burghardt was still in Ukraine, he did not publish any of his poems, except for a few in periodical literature. Zalizni sonety (Steel Sonnets), 1926, consisting of masterful translations from the German original, was the only book that he published in Ukraine. As an émigré he wrote under the pseudonym Jurij Klen, and published several works which showed him to be a neoromantic classicist. In the year 1937 appeared his long poem in octaves Prokljati roky (The Accursed Years) and in 1943 his volume of lyrics Karavely. At the end of World War Two, he began writing his monumental epic poem Popil imperij (The Ashes of Empires), and completed four parts before he died. In his prose work, Spohady pro neokljasykiv (Memoirs about the Neoclassicists), 1947, he gave tribute to his exiled friends, and left posterity an invaluable first-hand source for the study of this original group of poets. Klen was an author of several short stories and of a volume of parodies. He was also one of the few translators of Shakespeare

22. S. Hordynsky, "The Fivefold Cluster...", p. 258.

into Ukrainian, and presented Ukrainian literature with translations of Hamlet and The Tempest. His collected works were published posthumously in the late fifties.²³

MYXAJLO DRAJ-XMARA

The fifth poet of the "Fivefold Cluster," Myxajlo Draj-Xmara,²⁴ was born of an old kozak family on September 28, 1889, in the village Mala Kanivka near Poltava. He received his early schooling from a private tutor who prepared him for the Gymnasium in Čerkasy. Like Fylypovyc', he won a scholarship to the Halahan College in 1906. After graduation in 1910, he received a four-year scholarship to the University of Kiev. In 1913 the Slavic Society of the University sent him abroad to L'viv, Budapest, Zagreb, and Bucharest to do advance research in Slavic studies. After he graduated from the University of Kiev in 1915, Draj-Xmara went to the University of St. Petersburg where he continued his studies until the Revolution. With the outbreak of the Revolution, Draj-Xmara willingly left for Ukraine, for he felt that it was his duty to participate in the country's intellectual revival. In 1918 he was appointed to the chair of Slavic Languages at the University of Kam'janec'-Podil's'kyj, and remained at this

23. So far only volumes II, III, and IV have come out in print.

24. Biographical data on Draj-Xmara was taken primarily from the following sources: Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrodžennja, pp. 253-257; Oksana Asher, A Ukrainian Poet in the Soviet Union (New York: Svoboda, 1959); M. Draj-Xmara, Poeziji (New York: Svoboda, 1964), pp. 273-278; and Orest, ed., Bezsmertni...

position for the next five years; during this time he also held several administrative positions: Dean of the School of Humanitarian Sciences, 1918-1920, and editor of the University publication Zapysky (Notes), 1919-1920. In 1923 he moved to Kiev where he had been offered the position of Professor of the Ukrainian Language at the Medical Institute. He was also elected Head of the Slavic Department of the Ukrainian Academy of Science, where he remained for the next ten years (1923-1933).

On February 3, 1933, Draj-Xmara was arrested by the NKVD. The mild accusations addressed at him after the publication of his sonnet "Swans" now developed into monstrous persecution. Although he was released after three months, and although he was promised recompensation for his losses and reinstatement of his former status and position, Draj-Xmara was a marked man. His former position was not restored and he could not obtain employment anywhere. The life of financial privations which he and his family endured (he virtually lived from the sale of clothes and books) came to an ignominious end with his second and final arrest in 1935. Draj-Xmara's trial was a long one and was referred for a special hearing. Despite the incessant efforts of the local prosecutors he refused to admit to any crimes of "espionage and terrorism." Nevertheless, his case, as most cases handled by the courts of the NKVD, had been decided beforehand, and in 1936 Draj-Xmara was sentenced to five years at hard labor, and sent to the northeastern concentration camps for "counter-revolutionary" activity.

The letters which he succeeded in sending his family provide

a vivid and devastating account of his life in the camps.²⁵ The starved and physically disabled man, who, when unable to stand on his diseased and swollen feet, was hung up by ropes and forced to work, did not survive his five-year sentence. In 1939 his family was informed of his death.²⁶

Draj-Xmara began writing verse while still in Halahan College, and published his first poem in the College magazine Lukomor'e (The Sea Valley). His first published works, however, were scholarly articles. In 1911 appeared his "Intermediji peršoji polovyny XVIII viku v rukopysu Zbirky Tixonova Peterburz'koji Publichnoji Biblioteky" (Intermedia of the First Half of the XVIII Century in the Manuscript Collection of Tixonov of the Petersburg Public Library). As a result of his research abroad Draj-Xmara published a monograph on the work of the Croatian poet Kačić-Miošić, "Rasgovor ugodni narode slovinskoga..." (Pleasant Discourse to the Slavic People...), in 1914, for which he was awarded a gold medal by the Historico-Philological Faculty of the University of Kiev. While in Kam'janec'-Podil's'kyj Draj-Xmara published some of his poems in literary journals such as Nova dumka (New Thought). In 1926 appeared his first and only book of verse Prorosten' (Young Shoots) which reflects his masterful neoclassical form and his early symbolist tendencies. During the twenties Draj-Xmara sporadically

25. These letters were published in a selected form by Jurij Klen in "Spohady pro neokljasykiv," Tvory, vol. III, pp. 107-193.

26. Draj-Xmara, Poeziji, pp. 285-286.

published his poems in periodical literature.²⁷ His translations of Dante's Divine Comedy and of the Finnish Kalevala were confiscated at the time of his second arrest. Draž-Xmara's works were never republished in Soviet Ukraine. His wife and his daughter, Oksana Asher, however, who managed to escape from the Soviet Union, have published a full collection of Draž-Xmara's extant work, Poeziji, 1964.

27. For a full bibliographical listing of such publications see: Lejtes and Jasek, Desjat' rokov..., vol. I, pp. 145-146; and Draž-Xmara, Poeziji, pp. 280-281.

CHAPTER II

THE NEOCLASSICAL "SCHOOL"

It is a paradox that whereas some of the officially organized groups of poets and writers are seldom mentioned in a historical survey of contemporary Ukrainian literature, the neoclassical "school," "group," or "organization," which was neither of these, is usually presented as the most prominent and noted literary current of the time. There was no union among these five poets and scholars save one of friendship. Dubbed by their critics as "Neoclassicists" and united by one of them under the poetic image of a "Fivefold Cluster," this group of poets would rather fit the definition of a Pleiad had they consisted of one prominent poet and four lesser ones. They were, however, each in his right, equal masters of verse. Had they lived in the nineteenth century they would have been referred to as a literary circle, akin to those of a political nature existing at the time, like the Petraševskij Circle in Russia. As the members of the political circles were united by a common attitude toward politics, bound by a common ideology, so the Neoclassicists were drawn to one another by a common aesthetic view of art and culture.

The prose writer Viktor Domontovyc^V, who is sometimes included in the Kievan Neoclassicist group, attributes its existence to chance meetings and friendships:

There was no "neoclassical organization." There were no statutes, no assemblies, no meetings, no minutes, no presidents, no secretaries. One could not become a member of the organization, in the same way that one cannot open an open door. There was no organization. There was friendship and besides that there was nothing else. Friendships originated, and from inner closeness unity was born. Still in Kiev began the friendship and cooperation between Zerov and Fylypovych. In the year 1920 the life paths of Ju. Klen [Burghardt] and Zerov crossed. In 1922, by the will of fate, I ended up in Baryshivka. We returned to Kiev in 1923 and in the spring of the same year Ryl's'kyj came to Kiev from Romanivka and we became friends with him. Somewhat later Myx. Draj-Xmara arrived from Kam'janec'. And with this the circle became complete. 1

Several of the Neoclassicists had belonged to a formal organization ASPYS (Asocijacija Pys'mennykiv - Association of Writers)², but not as a group, only individually. When this organization ceased to exist and formed into "Lanka," the Neoclassicists were no longer members. They opposed literary organizations and stayed away from all of them. The fact, however, that they often met as friends and that they kept aloof from other organizations led the organization-minded Soviet critics to believe that the Neoclassicists, as they called them, were also a literary organization. That this group did not deny the name given them shows that they were rather proud of being called the "Neoclassicists." The name actually applies only to one member of the group, Zerov. Zerov's love for the poets of antiquity, his emulation

1. M. Orest, ed., Bezsmeretni, zbirnyk spohadiv pro M. Zerova, P. Fylypovycha i M. Draj-Xmaru (Munich: Instytut literatury im. Myxajla Oresta, 1963), pp. 270-271. My italics - DSS.

2. Volodymyr Radzykevych, Ukrains'ka literatura XX stolittja (Philadelphia: Ameryka, 1952), p. 92, lists Zerov, Ryl's'kyj, Fylypovych, and Burghardt as members of ASPYS.

of the French Parnassians, his excellent translations from both, merited for him the name Neoclassicist. Although Zerov was by no means the leader of the group, he was the most outspoken member and, as Klen put it, "the center of gravity."³ It is not surprising then that the neoclassical attitude of Zerov was transferred to his friends. Whether under his influence or whether they possessed such tendencies inherently, the other four members of the group agreed with Zerov and shared his neoclassical views and his aesthetic tastes. By no means, however, did they emulate him or one another in their own poetic work.

Zerov's love for the poets of antiquity and his admiration of the Parnassians made him advocate the emulation of their poetic form. This placed him in opposition to the undisciplined mass literature of the literary organizations, and made him a severe critic of their work. In retaliation the critics of these organizations attacked him and his friends and accused him of being behind the times, detached from the historic momentum of the nation's new proletarian culture. They denounced him as a bourgeois desiring to force the new Ukrainian literature into the decayed and degenerated forms and attitudes of antiquity and of bourgeois Europe. Oddly enough, it is the NKVD which finally formed a definite group out of the Neoclassicists. To the above accusations they added counter-revolution and terrorism, and claimed that Zerov was the alleged head of this group which planned to overthrow the Soviet regime.

3. Jurij Klen, "Spohady pro neokljasykiv," Ivory (Toronto: Jurij Klen Foundation, 1957), vol. III, p. 143.

This notion was utter nonsense. The Neoclassicists had no intention or desire to overthrow any form of government and were basically apolitical. Their one and only concern was the development of Ukrainian literature in the reborn nation. With the exception of Ryl's'kyj,⁴ the Neoclassicists were primarily scholars and secondarily poets. As scholars they differed from the generation of modernists who preceded them and from their contemporaries, the Soviet writers.⁵ As scholars they were aware of the dangers that could befall Ukrainian letters if they did not adhere to standards of world literature. They realized that before Ukrainian writers could develop freely they would have to study the masters of the past. Before one could sit down to write a novel, one had to learn the alphabet well. This alphabet consisted of three letters: (A) Assimilation of the heritage of the literary masters of the past should be the concern of every author. A writer should have a thorough knowledge of world literature. A Ukrainian writer should incessantly and systematically work on translations in order to add to his knowledge and to enrich the store of writing in Ukrainian. (B) Every writer should know the cultural and literary achievements of Ukraine and should be able to re-evaluate them in the

4. Here, of course, Ryl's'kyj of the twenties is meant. Later in his life, Ryl's'kyj, too, became a prominent literary scholar. It must be remembered, however, that this thesis deals with the Kievan Neoclassicists who as a "group" existed roughly only eighteen years (1917-1935), and when observations are made about the group as a whole, only this period of each author's life is considered.

5. M. Orest, ed., Bezsmertni..., pp. 274-275.

light of his knowledge of world literature and culture. (C) A high artistic level and mastery of the forms of art should be compulsory for all writers, especially for those beginning to write. These three points comprised the "program" of the Neoclassicists.⁶

The Neoclassicists themselves adhered very strictly to these rules which truly unite them as a poetic school. Although each one of them was an original poet, they all were erudite scholars and had a thorough knowledge of the masters of world literature. Each of them succeeded in achieving some of the most successful translations in Ukrainian literature. As scholars they studied Ukrainian literature and in their literary works clarified and re-evaluated it. Because of their efforts Ukrainian literary criticism was finally freed of its provincial ethnic attitudes of the Jefremov Populist school of criticism, which judged literature not by its merit alone, but by its merit for the ethnic culturism of the Ukrainian people.⁷ In their original works and in their translations the Kievan Neoclassicists produced highly polished verse, masterful but pliable form, a very high standard of versification in general. Their guiding light, their criterion as to what was masterful in versification, rested on the classic notion of kalagatia (The Beautiful Good). This they interpreted also in the ancient Greek way, that is, that which is perfect is beautiful and what is beautiful is good. Perfection is Beauty and Beauty is

6. Mykola Zerov, Do dżerel (L'viv: Ukrajins'ke vydavnytvo, 1943), p. 264.

7. George S. N. Luckyj, Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917-1934 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 34.

Perfection and Good.

It is not strange, therefore, that the Neoclassicists, especially Zerov, admired the classics so much. This admiration led the Neoclassicists to a thorough study of the classics and to translations of their works. This had a twofold result: on the one hand it enriched Ukrainian literature and presented Ukrainian writers with excellent material to draw upon in their own language; on the other hand it provided the Neoclassicists with the training they desired and resulted in the enrichment of their own poetry with many allusions to classical literature. The same admiration and emulation of the classics was shared by the Parnassian school of French poetry. Therefore, the Neoclassicists considered the French Parnassians, especially Leconte de Lisle and José Hérédia, as their immediate masters.

In one of his sonnets, Zerov states quite clearly that the path Ukrainian literature should follow is the path of the Parnassians:

The plastic art with contours strict and clear,
Trains' iron symmetry and chosen style ---
This is the way, Ukraine, that you must steer:

José Hérédia, Leconte de Lisle,
The high Parnassian ever-shining lights
Will lead you to your true and proper heights.⁸

The Ukrainian Neoclassicists had good reason to summon Ukraine to the admiration of the Parnassians, for they were influenced by one and the same ideology which was "saturated by the ancient principle of 'kalagatia' -- harmonious union of emotional beauty and

8. The original is in Mykola Zerov, Sonnetarium (Berchtesgaden: Orlyk, 1948), p. 156. The sonnet is called "Moloda Ukraïna" (Young Ukraine).

cultural ideals of art."⁹

The French Parnassians evolved in France as a reaction against the cult of personality and exuberance of the Romantics. The leader of the Parnassian movement was Leconte de Lisle (1818-1894), an erudite scholar of religions of India, antiquity, history, archeology, and philosophy. His life was not very eventful, and its apex was marked by his election to the French Academy in 1886. His literary output included several collections of verse: Poèmes antiques, 1853, Poèmes barbares, 1862, Poèmes tragiques, 1883, the posthumously published Poèmes finales, two versified tragedies, and some prose translations of ancient Greek poets.

Leconte de Lisle's most prominent follower was José-Maria de Hérédia (1842-1905) who, like his master, though born outside of France, spent most of his life in Paris.¹⁰ One critic regards him as the best of all the Parnassians, especially in the art of writing sonnets, and considers him to be the finest sonneteer in French literature.¹¹ His main work is the excellent collection of sonnets, Les Trophées, 1893.

The poetic work of both de Lisle and Hérédia is marked by

9. V. Deržavyn, "C. Leconte de Lisle i poezija francuz'koho neokljasyizmu," Ukrajina i svit, vol. II (January, 1950), p. 53.

10. Leconte de Lisle was born in the West Indies and Hérédia in Cuba.

11. George Heely Henning, ed., Representative French Lyrics of the Nineteenth Century (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1935), p. 339.

extreme objectivity, clarity, plastic imagery, and perfection of form. They believed strongly in "Théophile Gautier's somewhat frigid doctrine of 'art for art's sake', married it to the cult of form prescribed by Théodore de Banville, and produced a type of poetry distinguished by pictorial [and verbal] rather than emotional ... qualities."¹² In their images they tried to be as plastic and precise as possible and for this reason they turned to the poets of ancient Greece, for, "L'Hellade ancienne n'est-elle pas, par excellence, la terre de la plastique, de la chère plastique?"¹³

It is because of all these qualities - the aesthetic principle of 'kalagatia', erudition, clarity, plasticity, purity of language and perfection of form, as well as an admiration for the literature of ancient Greece and Rome - which the Parnassians advocated, cultivated and believed in, that the Neoclassicists found in them mentors for themselves and for all of Ukrainian poetry. The influence of the Parnassians on the Neoclassicists was so important that some critics maintain that "without the emulation of Leconte de Lisle and Hérédia, Ukrainian Neoclassicism would have taken not years but decades to formulate itself... and would not have revealed itself to be so original and different from Roman classicism, Russian Acmeism and from the French Parnassianism..."¹⁴

12. Geoffrey Brereton, An Introduction to the French Poets --- Villon to the Present Day (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1957), p. 162.

13. Fernand Desonay, Le Rêve Hellenique chez les poètes Parnassiens (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1928), p. 47.

14. V. Deržavyn, "Poezija Mykoly Zerova i ukrajins'kyj kljasycyzm," an introduction to Mykola Zerov, Sonnetarium, pp. 21-22.

The Neoclassicists were drawn to the Parnassians also by a joint neoclassical purpose:

Revival of eternal laws of art by means of the aesthetical heightening of that which was best and truly creative in the literary modes of a former period is the unchangeable role of neoclassicism in all European literatures; because of this role neoclassicism is reborn periodically after every new 'Sturm und Drang', and enriches the national literatures with new, polished variants of masterful art, which, however, are always immortal because of unchanging aesthetic tradition.¹⁵

On two points, however, the Neoclassicists did not agree with the Parnassians. The first is a difference in outlook created by political events. The failure of the Revolution of 1848 brought bitter disillusionment to the future Parnassians and their work was marked by profound pessimism.¹⁶ The success of the fight for Ukraine's liberation and the Ukrainization policy of the Bolsheviks after they took over Ukraine colored the literature of the time with extreme optimism which the Neoclassicists shared.

The second difference is more important. Whereas the Parnassians believed only in art for art's sake, the Neoclassicists accepted this idea but augmented it with the notion that this belief was necessary as an educational measure. The three points mentioned above which comprised the neoclassical program were all based on the notion of art for art's sake, not because this was the only proper way in itself, but because this was the way that Ukrainian art had to develop in order to survive and flourish. For the Neoclassicists the idea of art for art's sake was a two-edged

15. Deržavyn, Ukrajina i svit, vol. II, p. 51.

16. Henning, ed., French Lyrics..., p. 269.

sword: with one edge they fought off the upcoming propagandistic use of art as advocated by Socialist Realism; with the other edge they combatted the haphazard notions of art propagated immediately after the Revolution by organizational literature which paid too little, if any, attention to the quality of work. Even before the Revolution, the literary revival of the Modernists¹⁷ was marked by a lack of formal education and literary knowledge among the writers.¹⁸ The consequences of this deficiency were not as tragic, however, as those arising from the lack of education of most writers after the Revolution, for the poets of the "modern school" were gifted naturally, whereas the poets after the Revolution in many cases had no inborn gift for poetry but merely rode the band-wagon, and as members of literary organizations printed their artless verse.

Because of this lack of literary education among the poets, the Neoclassicists saw that art for art's sake was not enough, that art for art's sake could only be a weapon, an implement, by which the best artistic achievements of generations could be studied and utilized. This "pragmatic" feature of the Ukrainian Neoclassicists' doctrine makes them a unique movement in the history of world neoclassicism.

The realization that Ukrainian literature requires a thorough knowledge of the masters of world literature was not an original idea of the Ukrainian Neoclassicists. They inherited this through

17. The group of poets and writers that centered around the publishers Ukrains'ka xata (Ukrainian Home) and Moloda muza (Young Muse) were called Modernists.

18. Orest, ed., Bezsmertni, pp. 274-275.

the study of Ukrainian classics, who, without exception, were great Europeanizers of Ukrainian culture and slowly worked, unfortunately individually, at broadening the horizons of Ukrainian literature and at incorporating into Ukrainian literature through translations the works of immortal significance.

Ivan Kotljarevs'kyj, (1769-1838), the Father of New Ukrainian literature based primarily on the vernacular, must be considered the first predecessor of the Neoclassicists in Ukraine. His Enejida (1798-1842), a travestied translation of the Aeneid of Virgil, cannot be considered, however, a purely classicistic work. Nevertheless, the use of a classic even in travestied form to generate interest in a work and induce people to read in Ukrainian, and furthermore, the modelling of the first work in Ukrainian on a classic show Kotljarevs'kyj as a true forerunner of the Neoclassicists. He was a scholar thoroughly acquainted with classical literature and used this knowledge not only to broaden the horizons of Ukrainian literature but to give it a beginning.

The National Bard, Taras ^VSev^Včenko (1814-1861), whose poetry was spontaneous and intuitive, received a classical education during his studies at the Academy of Art in St. Petersburg. This education was reflected in his late poetry and prose (1855-1861) which is full of "...classical subjects, motifs, and images... . A concise, polished expression, full of plasticity, and classical rhythm,"¹⁹ is linked with this. Besides the many classical allusions

19. E. Ju. Pelens'kyj, "Sev^Včenko - kljasyk," Ukrajins'ka knyha, ed. E. Ju. Pelens'kyj (L'viv-Krakiv: Ukrajins'ke vydavnyctvo, 1942), No. IV, p. 8.

that embellish the poetry of this period of Ševčenko's creativity are his many translated adaptations (Podražanija) of Biblical themes (which were considered a part of the classical education at the time) which definitely characterize Ševčenko as a predecessor of the Neoclassicists, for through these adaptations he desired to broaden the scope of the new Ukrainian literature which he was molding.

Pantelejmon Kuliš (1819-1897), a contemporary of Ševčenko and eclipsed by the latter's greatness, was perhaps most akin to the Neoclassicists in his awareness of the necessity to acquaint Ukrainian literature with the best achievements of world literature:

... [Kuliš] knew the highest creative achievements of world literature, sensed the contemporary poverty of Ukrainian literature when it was necessary for him to 'look into the mirror of the world.' Then he was not at a loss for words and reproached his nation, calling it 'the stray of the steppe,' or 'the wretched Asiatic' that 'becomes a hero only above Jews, does not learn from the Greeks, nor from the Latins, and with its darkness shames even the Muscovite...' 20

While chastizing his fellow countrymen, P. Kuliš incessantly worked on his own translation of the Bible,²¹ Shakespeare, Byron, Schiller, Goethe, and Heine, despite the fact that he had little hope of publishing them owing to the conditions of the time and

20. Svjatoslav Hordyns'kyj, ed., "Poezija Mykoly Zerova," an introduction to Mykola Zerov, Kamena (L'viv: Ukrajin's'ke vydavnytvo, 1943), p. 3.

21. Mytropolyt Ilarion (Ivan Ohijenko), Biblijni studiji (Winnipeg: Naša kul'tura, 1963), vol. I, pp. 66-67 and 84, asserts that Kuliš' first translation was destroyed in a fire, but the poet renewed his efforts and retranslated the whole work.

the intellectual level of the reading public.²² Nonetheless, Kuliš^V believed that his translations were more than necessary; that a time would come when Ukrainian literature would finally climb out of its regional-ethnic bounds; and that a stock of world literature in the Ukrainian language would help in bringing this about.

No less a predecessor of the Neoclassicists was Ivan Franko (1856-1916), a man whose intellectual growth reached West European standards. Franko was a universalist in his activities, and his work in the field of literature embraces practically all genres. He was an excellent poet, prosaist, playwright, and translator; in addition, he was a prominent scholar. Although constantly hindered by the provincialism of Halyčyna^V (Galicia, Western Ukraine), Franko managed to enrich Ukraine's literature through translations of the classics and through themes and motifs taken from the Far East and from Western Europe.

A younger contemporary of Franko, Lesja Ukrajinka (1871-1913), although not as universal in her literary activities, in her poetry, and especially in her versified dramas, broadened the horizons of nineteenth century Ukrainian literature.

Although the hard struggle of these Ukrainian classics was instrumental in that "by the time of the Revolution, Ukrainian literature was mistress in her own right...",²³ their work in a

22. V. Radzykevyc^V, Istorija ukrajins'koji literatury (Detroit: Bat'kivščyna, 1955), vol. II, p. 101. These dismal conditions in Ukraine existed primarily because of the Tsarist oppression of Ukrainian language and literature. In 1876 Tsar Aleksander II issued the notorious decree, Ems'kyj ukaz, which forbade all publication of Ukrainian books in the territory of Imperial Russia.

23. Luckyj, Literary Politics..., p. 27.

century did not result in such achievements as were attained by the Neoclassicists in a decade of their activity. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, the predecessors all worked as individual men, each trying in his own way and time to do as much as possible for the expansion of Ukrainian literary vistas. Secondly, each of these forerunners encountered constant hindrances, due to a lack of appreciation of their work, provincialism, intellectual backwardness of the reading public, the immaturity of the Ukrainian literary language. Most of all their progress was impeded by the persecution of the Ukrainian language, literature, and culture (with the exception of its ethnographic elements) by the Tsarist regime, a state from which in reality all the other obstacles stemmed.

The Neoclassicists, on the other hand, arrived on the scene after the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century revival of national awareness in Ukraine. They inherited the fruits of the indefatigable labors of their predecessors who, despite obstacles, somehow managed to polish the literary word and to widen the literary horizon. Finally, the Neoclassicists emerged after the downfall of Tsarist Russia and the subsequent political rebirth of Ukraine. They were a part of the Ukrainian cultural, political and literary Renaissance, a part of "Vitajizm."²⁴

The Ukrainian Renaissance of the twenties, or the era of "Vitajizm", can be divided into three periods.

24. For a fuller discussion of the term "Vitajizm" see: Jurij Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrodžennja (Paris: Instytut literacki, 1959), pp. 931-957.

The violent and joyful period of rebirth in which everything awoke, everything resounded with fresh new notes. As a symbol of this period stands Pavlo Tyčyna (1891---), the organic, inner, and highly musical voice of a nation reborn.

The period of reflection and reason in which a dialectical debate arose over the proper channel of the new national force was marked by great literary disputes, the famous Literary Discussion (1925-1928). This period has two symbols: Mykola Zerov, the highly educated, disciplined reason of a nation reborn, and Mykola Xvyl'ovyj, the pulsating heart of a nation reborn. Because of his education, the former realized the necessity of thorough education, of a gradual erection of an edifice resting on a firm foundation of the best in the world. The latter joined Zerov because of an inner realization that only one way exists for the new nation and its literature --- definitely, totally, away from Moscow and toward Western Europe.

The destruction of the new nation is the period over which death stands as a symbol, when the new reason was destroyed, the heart burst from grief, and the voice lost its melody and music, and started to chant paeans for death.

CHAPTER III

SUPERB CRAFTSMANSHIP

The universal formula for neoclassical poetry is found in the statement of A. Chénier: "about new themes, let us write antique poems."¹ A harsh critic of English Classicism and of classicism and neoclassicism in general, Robert Graves, expanded this formula:

According to classical, Apollonian doctrine, the test of a good poet is his 'ability to express time-proved sentiments in time-honored forms with greater fluency, charm, sonorousness, and learning than his rivals' (p. 495). The classical poets use 'old-fashioned diction, formal ornament, and regular, sober, well-polished metre, as a means of upholding the dignity of their office' (p. 495).²

This critical description of classicism delineates the main features of the works of the Ukrainian Neoclassicists with the sole exception that they turned to the classicistic way of writing poetry (for reasons discussed in the preceding chapter, i.e., to raise the cultural level of Ukrainian literature), and, therefore, to uphold not "the dignity of their office," but to maintain the dignity of Ukrainian literature.

It is strange, however, that out of the five Neoclassicists

1. V. Deržavyn, "C. Leconte de Lisle i poezija francuz'koho neokljasycyzmu," Ukrajina i svit, vol. II (January, 1950), p. 51.

2. Robert Graves' ideas, augmented and quoted by Douglas Day, Swifter Than Reason --- The Poetry and Criticism of Robert Graves (Durham, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 164.

only one, namely M. Zerov, was always a classicist.

The others can be quite readily treated as members of other literary currents: Ryl's'kyj was a symbolist in his early years, and later his poetry reflected definite impressionistic overtones; Draj-Xmara was also a symbolist to a degree; Fylypovyč was an early symbolist who possessed neoromantic tendencies somewhat later; and Klen's poetry was definitely neoromantic with pronounced characteristics of expressionism. Yet all these poets are considered as exponents of the neoclassical current. The reason for this, in addition to their joint desire to bring Ukrainian literature into closer contact with West European masters, lies in certain features found in the poetry of all the Neoclassicists. One such feature which is perhaps most noticeable is the superb craftsmanship of their poetry. Related to this is their desire for, and cultivation of, orthodox poetic forms.

"However different and individual these poets were, they agreed on the basic elements of poetic technique, such as perfect form... ."3 The striving for this form, the cultivation of established verse forms, and the shunning of the popular vers libre, on the one hand, unites all of the Neoclassicists and, on the other, definitely separates them from their contemporaries, almost none of whom could equal the consistent and highly polished formal verse written by the Neoclassicists. The most orthodox in this respect was Zerov. In his own poetry he used only two forms, the sonnet and the Alexandrine distich (almost

3. Oksana Asher, A Ukrainian Poet in the Soviet Union (New York; Svoboda, 1959), p. 8.

exclusively, with the exception of sonnetoids). He perfected these to such a degree that it is virtually impossible to find an equivalent in the work of any other poet, except perhaps in that of Ryl's'kyj. Besides working on his translation of the classic poets, Zerov constantly polished his own sonnets, and although he produced verse of the highest order, he was never satisfied with his work and criticized it severely. In a letter to Vasyl' Čaplenko he calls his sonnets "dried bread crumbs," and the product of this "dried crumb industry" he calls "poetry for home consumption."⁴ In a more serious vein, he complains that "syntactical monotony, lexical limitations, forced and repeated rhymes, will soon put an end to my sonnetizing."⁵ How utterly harsh Zerov was on himself, and how unjust his criticism of his sonnets - perhaps the best ever written in Ukrainian with regard to form - can be readily seen after reading the Sonnetarium. One should understand, however, that "form" in the neoclassical interpretation, as Professor Deržavyn notes,⁶ is not considered the norm of versification, but rather the method. Form is not the mold into which a poet mechanically forces words rhymed and metered after a given scheme, but the "method of expression," by which a poet transforms his inspiration into poetry. Without form he produces only disorganized, albeit

4. M. Zerov, Corollarium (Munich: Instytut literatury, 1958), p. 189.

5. Ibid., p. 183.

6. V. Deržavyn, "Poezija Mykoly Zerova i ukrajins'kyj kljasycyzm," an introduction to Mykola Zerov, Sonnetarium (Berchtesgaden: Orlyk, 1948), p. 9.

gifted, inspirations which, not having passed through the artistic process of strict composition, remain beyond the borders of art and poetry.

The scope of this work permits the quoting of only one sonnet; but even one of Zerov's sonnets, chosen at random, will illustrate the superb craftsmanship of the maitre of the Kievan Neoclassicists:

Kljasyky

Vy v^vše davno stupyly za porih
Zyttja zem^vnoho, lirnyky-pivbohy
I holos vaš -- rapsodiji j eklohy ---
Dzvenjat' u t'mi Ajidovyx dorih.

I čornyj sum, bezmovnyj žal' nalih
Na bereh na^vš, na skyts'ki perelohy . . .
Nev^vže povik ne byde vam spromohy
Navidatys' na na^vš pivničnyj snih?

I va^vše slovo, smak, kalahatija
Dlja nas --- lyš poryv, nedosjažna mrija
Ta hostroji rozpuky hostryj bil'.

I lyš odna v^vše tišyt' dux poeta,
Odna vidrodžuje vaš strohyj styl' ---
Jasna, dzvinka zakinčnist' soneta.⁷

The sonnet is Petrarchan in form and rhyme (abbaabba ccdede), as are all of Zerov's sonnets, since he followed Herédia who also used the Petrarchan form. The five-foot iambic metre is regular, but mellowed by an occasional pyrrhic foot, natural to the Ukrainian language and instrumental in moderating the pronounced iambic metre. The reason Zerov preferred the sonnet form as a method for his poetic expression lies, perhaps, in the infinite possibilities that the two-fold division of a sonnet presents. The octet-sestet division provides the poet with innumerable

variations of thesis and antithesis, "parallelism, symmetrical balance of syntagmas and images," and pronounced subordination of ideas from the general to the concrete singular.⁸

In his sonnetizing Zerov developed one special feature. When it went unnoticed by the critics, he commented on it in a letter to V. Caplenko:

Did you notice that in the sonnet about "Ivaniv Haj" [Ivan's Grove] I render the last line in six feet? This is not a coincidence (I did the same in "Knjaz' Ihor" [Prince Ihor] and in "Oleksandria" [Aleksandria]). It seemed to me that in condensing the content into the last line it is just as proper to prolong the line as it is in the Spenserian strophe [eight five-foot and a ninth six-foot iambic line, rhyming ababbcbcc]. Till now, as far as I know, no one has noticed my deviation from the canon.⁹

The above deviation from the norm is excellent proof that for Zerov the sonnet was not an unbending mold, a puzzle to be ordered by the proper arrangement of rhymed words in a set metrical pattern, but a method of expressing his inspirations. The elongation of the last line is parallel to the system of presentation used by Zerov, a system based primarily on the method used by Hérédia who usually strove to

... set the scene with carefully chosen 'colour' or 'atmosphere' words in the first quatrain, then to bring forward the particular figure or characteristic which he wishes to stress during the next lines of the poem. With the last tercet the image moves into full focus and the final line adds some significant feature which fixes it.¹⁰

8. Deržavyn, "Poezija Mykoly Zerova...", p. 23.

9. Zerov, Corollarium, p. 182.

10. Geoffrey Brereton, An Introduction to the French Poets --- Villon to the Present Day (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1957), p. 172.

Following this method, it was logical for Zerov to distinguish the line of focus, the final line, by elongation. For example, in one of the sonnets with an elongated line, "Prince Ihor,"¹¹ the first quatrain sets the scene as the prince sees it: "The sun beneath a dark cover, and Rus' is past the fiery horizon." The second quatrain locates the prince in front of his army and presents his address and exhortation to battle, "to remember the glorious days." In the first tercet the scene concentrates on the destination of the army and on the reflections of the prince: "How pleasant 'tis to fill the helmet with the Don." The second tercet focuses on the prince standing in the stirrups of his horse and looking ahead. The final line brings to a focus the horse's nostrils flaring "and sensing the mist of the far Don." In this last line the synthesis of the whole sonnet is contained, and by focusing on the quivering nostrils of the prince's horse Zerov presents the tension of the prince, the army, the desire for glory in battle, the urge for distant conquest that even the horse instinctively feels and to which he reacts. By adding an extra foot to the line it is intensified and heightened and suggests the poet's desire to fix the image definitely in the reader's mind, and thus prolong exposure to the focus of the image.

The same type of mastery and precision is found in the second verse form employed by Zerov, the Alexandrine distich. Although Zerov wrote more sonnets than Alexandrine couplets, he was an equal master in both. This ancient Greek and Latin senarius

11. Zerov, Sonnetarium, p. 152.

(six-foot iambic line) was called Alexandrine by the French. In the French language, however, it naturally divided itself into four feet of anapaests. The Alexandrine provided Zerov with a pliable and natural formal method for his poetic expression. In these twelve-line poems rhymed into couplets Zerov wrote some of his best epic-lyrical poetry and showed a supreme control of rich rhymes so essential to the structure of this verse.

V stepu

Vysokyj rivnyj step. Zelenyj rjad mohyl
 I mrijna dalečín', ščo mloju synix kryl
 Čaruje i zove do ellins'kyx kolonij.
 Hen-hen na obriji syl'vety temnyx konej,
 Namety i vozy, i skyty-orači.
 Iz vyriju letjat', kurlyčyčy, ključy,
 A z morja viter dme harjacyj, neterplyvyj.
 Ale poščo meni ci vitrovi poryvy
 I zajvoronkiv spiv, i prorostannja trav?
 Z jakoju b radistju ja vse ce prominjav
 Na homin prystani, lymaniv syni plesa,
 Na bruk i vulyci staroho Xersonesa!¹²

The rhymes, arranged in masculine couplets alternating with feminine ones, are perfect. The six-foot iambic lines, as in the sonnets, are tempered with sporadic pyrrhic feet as a result of which no metric chant, but only a freely flowing melodious verse, can be possible. Every line is divided by a regular caesura after the third foot. Zerov's sonnetizing influenced his writing of Alexandrines, for here, too, although the lines are set in a twelve-line stanza, a break exists similar to the octet-sestet division of a sonnet. The Alexandrine is divided contextually into a septet and a quintet. In the septet the poet paints the general scene, and in the quintet he reflects upon it. The order of images and ideas is also presented

12. Mykola Zerov, Catalepton (Philadelphia: Kyjiv, 1951), p. 9.

in a similar method to that used in the sonnet. In the poem quoted above he begins with the broad panorama of the steppe, and in the septet he paints its richness. A rejection of this scene in the first line of the quintet slowly transfers the focus to the preferred "din of the port," and fixes it in the last line on the "pavement and streets of old Xerson."

The quoted sonnet and Alexandrine must serve as examples for all of Zerov's original poetry. With respect to the cultivation and use of formal verse it is marked by "clear ... rhythm, irreproachable rhyme, and lack of any mannerisms,"¹³ and provides some of the best examples of poetry in the grand style ever written in Ukrainian.

Whereas Zerov preferred to limit himself to the perfecting of two verse forms, Maksym Ryl's'kyj, the most prolific of the Neoclassicists, demonstrated his mastery of many poetic forms from strict sonnets to blank verse and various metres. Although "the form of his poetry - rigid, consistent, and polished" - consisted of the "sonnet, rondo, octaves, hexametres that are so well suited to the quiet mood and outlook on life of this ancient Hellene...",¹⁴ he preferred the use of

... the five-foot iamb, which either flows smoothly in quatrains voiced by gracious weaving of rhymes, or is molded into the immovable rules of the sonnet, sestet, tercet, or passes into the narrative, quiet,

13. Svjatoslav Hordyns'kyj, "Poezija Mykoly Zerova," an introduction to Mykola Zerov, Kamena (L'viv: Ukrajin's'ke vydavnytstvo, 1943), p. 9.

14. Serhij Jefremov, Istorija ukrajins'koho pys'menstva (Kiev: Ukrajin's'ka nakladnja, 1924), vol. II, p. 359.

intonations of blank verse, thickly interspersed with enjambements, or rotates with a six-foot iamb.¹⁵

It is physically impossible to examine in a paper of this scope all of Ryl's'kyj's versification, nor is it necessary. It is important to remember that no matter what verse form Ryl's'kyj used, he always strove for perfection and was "far from imitating the experimentations of the decadent poets."¹⁶ Like all Neoclassicists he shunned vers libre, considered the amorphous poetry of some of his contemporaries to be nonsense, and in his own poetry maintained "clean and graceful classical metres and canonic strophes... ." ¹⁷ With respect to canonic or orthodox strophes, like the sonnet, there are some critics who consider Ryl's'kyj as the most proficient sonneteer in Ukrainian literature. For although Zerov wrote some of the best sonnets, his production was very small. Ryl's'kyj, however, "automized the use of these various forms [like sonnets] to such a degree that every average poet could learn to write a respectable sonnet not from poetics which do not exist, but from Ryl's'kyj."¹⁸

The number of sonnets that Ryl's'kyj wrote was not, of course, enough to merit for him the title "teacher of sonneteers." This

15. Halyna Sydorenko, Viršuvannja v ukrajins'kij literaturi (Kiev: Radjans'kyj pys'mennyk, 1962), p. 112.

16. Ibid., p. 113.

17. Ibid., p. 113.

18. Ivan Košelivec', Sučasna literatura v URSR (New York: Proloh, 1964), p. 98.

honor was based on Ryl's'kyj's making the sonnet, through his frequent and excellent use of it, an inherent Ukrainian verse form, not a form to be imitated with varied success from foreign masters. In short, he had achieved what, as a Neoclassicist, he set out to do.

Zerov himself realized the superb quality of Ryl's'kyj's verse in which he saw the Ukrainian

... classicistic style, with its balance and clarity, picturesque epithets, strong, logical structure and rigid sequence of thought. At times he [Ryl's'kyj] reaches the heights of Leconte de Lisle, at times he joins the directness of Homer with the polished strokes of Héradia; or at times over lines of verse he will pour out a capricious stream of almost narrative syntax, so akin to that of Mickiewicz... .¹⁹

An example of one sonnet will exemplify what Zerov meant by the "classicistic style..."

Ljuds'kist'

P. Tyčyni

V
Cervonobokym jablukom okruhlym
Skotyvsja den' dospilyj i tjažkyj,
I nič povil'nym pomaxom ruky
Syroki tini čornym pyše vuhlem.
Solodkoju striloju piznij cvit,
Skradajučysja, prymorožek ranyt'
Dzvenyt' zemlja, jak kovanyj kopyt,
Zyma pryjde -- i sercja ne obmanyt'.

Vse bude tak, jak pysano v knyžkax:
Zirčastyj snih, lehkyj na vitax inij
I holosy samotni u poljax.

Ta j po snihax, metelycjax poplyne,
Jak u dzvinkyx, nezmirjanyx morjax,
Nevirnyj čoven virnoji ljudyny.²⁰

19. Mykola Zerov, Do džerel (L'viv: Ukrajins'ke vydavnytvo, 1943), pp. 250-251.

20. Maksym Ryl's'kyj, Ivory v desjaty tomax (Kiev: Dvxl., 1960), vol. 1, p. 258.

One immediately notices that the Petrarchan rhyme scheme, adhered to by Zerov, has been altered by Ryl's'kyj: not abbaabbaccdede but abbacdcdefegeq. Thus Ryl's'kyj's sonnet is Petrarchan in its division into octet and sestet, but has the rhyme range of a Shakespearean sonnet: seven different rhymes, compared to the former five. Moreover, an outside rhyme in the first quatrain is substituted by a cross rhyme in the second. The expanded number of rhymes and the variation of their pattern, the frequency of assonance rhymes (okruhlym: vuhlem, cvit: kopyt), and the repeated use of pyrrhic feet to melow the iambs make Ryl's'kyj's sonnets very natural and pliable. Although no longer strictly orthodox, the sonnet under Ryl's'kyj's development lost all traces of a foreign verse form, and became accessible to any Ukrainian poet for purposes of imitation. Thus Ryl's'kyj was virtually the founder and teacher of Ukrainian sonnetizing.

In the two books of poems which Pavlo Fylypovyč^V managed to publish in his short life, he revealed his technical craftsmanship, poetic precision, and adherence to rigid form. By no means a writer of traditional verse only, like Zerov, Fylypovyč^V had an enormous range of versification. Like all Neoclassicists, however, he shunned and criticized the formless amalgamations of words in the vers libre of some contemporaries. Fylypovyč^V's specialty was blank verse which "demands from the poet unusual rhythmical-syntactic tact in order that he may convincingly construct regular strophes ... and to Fylypovyč^V is attributed the honor of canonizing this form in Ukrainian poetry."²¹ Although Ryl's'kyj

21. V. Deržavyn, "Velykyj poet-myslytel'," an introduction to

also was a master at this form of versification, he wrote more narrative blank verse, whereas Fylypovyč^V maintained its strict lyrical quality without the more casual and free conversational elements.

Nemov^V otu z požovklymy lystkamy
Dytjačyx rokiv knyhu --- i kazok,
Ty rozhornula oseny storinky
I des' znaxodyš nevidomyj spokij,
Blakytņi dumy i bezxmaryj žal'.

U vyrij ptyci prolitajut' v nebi --
Ty jix ne prosyš, šcob tebe zabrat',
Tobi myliše potemnile pole,
Zmarnili travy, i xolodni vody,
I prybranyj v červone zloto lis.

.....22

Although very proficient in blank verse, Fylypovyč^V wrote other verses with various rhymes. Of all the Neoclassicists, he used impure rhymes most freely. Perhaps under the influence of Russian Symbolists, he often juxtaposed masculine and feminine rhymes, and based himself on the principle of unvoicing the post-stress syllables. This provided Fylypovyč^V with a tremendous "variety of rhymes and enabled him to use the smallest metre -- two-foot iambs and trochees, which he also canonized in modern Ukrainian poetry:²³

P. Fylypovyč^V, Poeziji (Munich: Instytut literaturoznavstva pry Ukrajin's'komu vil'nomu universytetovi, 1957), p. 20.

22. P. Fylypovyč^V, Poeziji, p. 100.

23. V. Deržavyn^V, "Velykyj poet-myslytel'," p. 20.

Monomax

Dyvyvsja z veži
 Na temnyj bir.
 Tam slid vedmežyj
 I vovčyj zir.

Tam brodjat' tury
 U dalyni,
 A dub poxmuryj
 Kovtaje dni.

Dyvyvs' i zbroju
 Stysnuv xutcij,
 Sokoliv dvoje
 Vraz na pleči.

.....²⁴

Even more interesting and revealing is the following two-foot poem, in which the poet joins a trochee and an iamb in each line:

Lezamy sliv !-/-!
 Značte skarby !-/-!
 Volja i hniv !-/-!
 Holos doby !-/-!

.....

V praci buduj
 Radist' i smix, ---
 Znajdem, znajdu
 Scastja dlja vsix!²⁵

As a Neoclassicist, however, Fylypovyč^V also wrote traditional verses like sonnets which, though well written, possess one special feature which must be mentioned. This feature occurs in one sonnet only, and therefore no generalizations can be made. Fylypovyč^V is perhaps the first writer in Ukrainian literature, however, to write a sonnet with a Miltonian tail. The sonnet is Petrarchan,

24. P. Fylypovyč^V, Poeziji, p. 85.

25. Ibid., p. 81.

but a six-foot iamb instead of the regular five and a fifteenth line make it unique.

Goethe

Mynuly^V prystrasti, zmahannja i trudy,^{VV}
A vin ^Všče promovlja z pohasloho storic^{VV}čja.
Odverte i jasne^V horyt' joho obly^{VV}čja,
I pyl'no v dale^Včin' sjahaje zir tverdyj.

Mov cvyntarni haji, spljat' vajmars'ki^V sady,
V Evropi zbrojnyj huk i čar^V seredn'ovic^{VV}čja,
Ale na obriji zrostaje robitnyča
Respublika --- i vin vdyvljajet'sja tudy.

Ne verterivs'kyj^V žal', ne olimpijs'kyj spokij,
Ščo^V kriz' minlyvi dni i bystroplynni roky
Sukaje^V sjajeva nezminnoji krasj, ---

Iz^V Favstovyx ramen stari zirvavšy^V šaty,
Bažannja vse spiznat' i dym poryv krylatyj
U spadšcyni svojij najkraščij viddasy

Tym, ^{VV}ščo volijut' svit novyj pobuduvaty!²⁶

The Neoclassicist Dray-Xmara is perhaps the least orthodox in the usage of traditional verse forms. In his only published collection of poems, Prorosten', however, he uses, with utmost precision all the "classical meters: iambic, trochee, anapest [sic], and dactyl."²⁷ His use of poetic form ranges from the sonnet to short lyrics in four-foot iambs, to long poems in free verse. Dray-Xmara is the only Neoclassicist who did not shun vers libre and used it from the very beginning. His long poem "Povorot" (Return) has a very complex structure: "It consists of two chapters which are divided into smaller parts of different rhythms and lyrical

26. Ibid., p. 127.

27. Oksana Asher, "Dray-Khmara's Poetic Creativeness," The Ukrainian Quarterly, No. 4 (December, 1957), p. 360.

moods with the result that classical meters alternate in sharp contrast with free verse."²⁸

Although Draj-Xmara's poetry was very much influenced by Symbolism (in its musicality it reminds one of Verlaine), "his carefully constructed phraseology and polished words, always in complete harmony with the form of the poem, lead us to see in him also a master of 'Ukrainian neoclassicism.'"²⁹ His method of harmonizing the words and the meaning with the form of the poem is exactly that aspect which links Draj-Xmara with the other Neoclassicists in the desire to write properly constructed verses. Thus when Draj-Xmara writes about the Neoclassicists in the famous "Swans," he uses the appropriate structure, a sonnet, which turns out as well under his pen as under that of Zerov or Ryl's'kyj.

Lebedi

Na tyxim ozeri, de mrijut' verbolozy,
davno pryborkani, i vlitku j voseny
to pljuskotalysja, to plavaljy vony,
i syji hnulysja u nyx, jak bujni lozy.

Koly ž dzvinki, jak sklo, nadxodyly morozy
i pleso serxnulo, pirnuvsy v bili sny, --
plavci lamaly vraz ti kryžani lany,
i ne strašni bulj dlja nyx zymy pohrozy.

O, grono p'jativne nezdolanyx spivciv!
Kriz' burju j snih hrymyt' tvij peremožnyj spiv,
Ščo rozbyvaje lid odčaju i zneviry.

Derzajte, lebedi: z nevoli, z nebuttja
vede vas u svity jasne suzir'ja Liry,
de pinyt' okean kypučoho žyttja.³⁰

28. Ibid., p. 361.

29. Asher, A Ukrainian Poet..., p. 29. My italics - DSS.

30. Jurij Klen, Ivory (Toronto: Jurij Klen Foundation, 1957), vol. III, p. 153.

clouds, and three more short ones finish the climax in the three-foot iambic rhythm of falling rain. The Neoclassicists, on the whole, did not approve of this type of versification, for under the unskilled hand of the proletarian poet it often came out as prose in broken and uneven lines masquerading as poetry. Draj-Xmara's craftsmanship, however, did not fail, and he used free verse with precision and classical attention.

Jurij Klen, the only Neoclassicist who managed to emigrate, was the last to publish his works. Although thematically he is very close to a neoromantic, stylistically, from his first collection of poems Karavely to his last unfinished work Popil imperij, he remains a Neoclassicist. In Karavely his formal range extends from regular four-foot iambic strophes to dactylic hexametre, from rhymed verse of mixed metre to regular Petrarchan sonnets. In his long poem "Ukrajina" (Ukraine) he alternates his metre and strophe structure from (1) iambic pentametre couplets to (2) alternately rhymed four-foot iambic lines, to (3) alternately rhymed three-foot iambs, to (4) two-foot iambs alternately rhymed, to (5) seven-lined strophes of one choriamb each, to (6) quatrains of mixed metre (four-foot iambic lines [lines one and four] and five-foot iambic lines [lines two and three] cross rhymed), and (7) ends the poem in unrhymed lines of dactylic hexametre:

1. B'jučy u mid' svojix potužnyx dzvoniv,
Zvav marno Rym tebe u paps'ke lono,
2. Jakoho ždaly my davno.
I vin pryjšov v hrozi i hromi,
I hnivu Božoho vyno
Plesnuv iz čaši anhel s'omyj.

3. Nemov kolody v strupax,
^{VV}Ščo vabljať mokryx ptax,
^VZduvalys' čorn^Vni trupy
^VV nekošenyx žytax.
4. Pryjmy cilunok ---
 Polyn terpkyy.
 Smertel'nyj trunok
^VIz časi pyj.
5. Vse, ^{VV}ščo hulo
^VV nadrax zapillja,
^{VV}Vse, ščo roslo
^VV krykax bezkryllja:
 Stomlennyj hniv,
^{VV}Ščo klekotiv
^VV žerli vikiv,
6. Tob^Vi, prama^Vtir, ^Všlju pryvit
^VZ rokiv, ščo čas jix poroxom ukryje.
^VTa ščo tobi pišni cyx kljatyx lit
^VI čornyj žax, ščo vovkom vyje!
7. Purpurom drevnim vesna odjahaje lany naddniprjans'ki.³²

In his sonnetizing Klen is most marked through his cultivation of sonnets in cycles. The sonnets are Petrarchan in structure. His most noticeable cycle "Kolo žytt'ove" (Circle of Life) consists of seven sonnets describing the development of man from birth to death. The regularity of the sonnets, the seven-fold division of the cycle (an allusion to the seven days of creation) produce a feeling of inevitability; and the mystery of man's birth, growth, existence, and death, placed into a rigid verse form, give rise to an awing effect recalling the famous Sophoclean chorus:

There are many wonderful things, but none
 more wonderful than man. [Antigone 322]

Klen's cultivation of form produced in his next work,

32. Jurij Klen, Karavely (Prague: Ju. Tyšcenko Publisher, 1943), pp. 118-129.

Prokljati roky - a poetic account of the Stalin-organized famine in Ukraine in 1933 - "an impeccable classic octave (ottava rima)."³³

The ottava rima was invented by Boccaccio and consists of eight five-foot iambic lines rhyming abababcc. By choosing this classic metre, Klen emphasized his neoclassicistic desire to popularize in Ukrainian verse the metres of world literature, and also through its use in the Prokljati roky he enhanced "the tragic images of annihilation of everything that was sacred and human in that martyred land."³⁴ The most famous of all the verses in the poem is the one which Klen wrote as a eulogy to his lost comrades. His reproduction of the heroic metre of Tasso and Ariosto has few equals in Ukrainian poetry:

Pomolymos' za tyx, ^{VV}ščo u rozluci
pomrut' vidirvani ^{VV}vid ridnyx xat;
pomglymos' za tyx, ^{VV}ščo u rozpuci
^{VV}vnoči hryzut' zalizni ^Vštaby grat,
^{VV}ščo dusat' ^Vžal' u nevymovnij mucy,
za tyx koho vede na stratu kat.
Nad nymy, Hospody, v nebesnij tverdi
prostry svoji doloni myloserdni! 35

Even more noteworthy in its form is Klen's last and unfinished work Popil imperij. Here Klen's craftsmanship achieves great heights. The most striking aspect of the work from the structural point of view is Klen's utilization of the stanza used by Kotljarev-s'kyj in his travesty of the Aeneid. It is a ten-line stanza

33. C.H. Andrusyshen and Watson Kirkconnell, The Ukrainian Poets - Anthology (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 389.

34. Ibid., p. 389.

35. Klen, Ivory, vol. III, p. 189.

of iambic tetrametre rhymed ababccdeed, which shows that Klen as a Neoclassicist strived not only to cultivate the classical stanzas of world literature but also those of the Ukrainian masters.

A ja na ce: "Jak po pustyni
 pekel'nij Dant mene tjahav,
 to ne robyv z us'oho kpyny,
 a rič povážno traktuvav."
 "Bula u Danta inša vdača, ---
 škazav Enej. --- Zirkamy značyv
 sljaxy vin. Vas nosyv burun.
 Dant maljuvav na stinax fresky,
 a ja daju lyše grotesky,
 bo ja --- pustocnyk i žartun.³⁶

The lively four-foot iambic lines used by Kotljarevs'kyj for a hilarious travesty of the Aeneid are recreated by Klen to present a tragi-comedy of the Nazi terrors. In his revival of Kotljarevs'kyj's stanza, Klen was fulfilling the second programmatic point of the Neoclassicist creed: re-examination and re-evaluation of Ukrainian literary heritage and the cultivation of what was best in it. At the same time, however, Klen did not forget the first purpose of the Neoclassicists: assimilation into Ukrainian literature of all that was great in world literature. And in the realm of verse structure, Klen added to his other cultivated forms the famous terza rima of Dante's Divine Comedy.

Dante's terza rima consisted of lines of iambic pentametre with an extra syllable to make all rhymes feminine, so rhymed that each was used thrice in alternate lines, except for the rhyme of the first and last lines of a canto which occurred only twice. The lines were arranged into tercets. In every tercet starting from the beginning, the first and third lines rhymed, and the

36. Ibid., vol. II, p. 196.

second line introduced the rhyme for the first and third of the next three lines, and so on to the end of a canto where an extra line was added to leave no line unrhymed. Klen's only deviation from Dante's norm was that his alternate lines only have feminine rhyme.

Navkolo nas povstalo sonne misto.	-a
T!ma hlybynila, navit' lixtari	-b
vže ne svitylys', jak čudne namysto.	-a
.....	
"Ščo tam šuhaje o takij pori? ---	-b
spytavsjaja. -- Pohljan' na avto čorne!"	-c
-- "Vono šuhatyme až do zori.	-b
.....	
Koly hlybokyj son usix ohorne,	-c
vono pidkotyt' tyxo do dverej,	-d
strašne, nemov ta dolja neoborna,	-c
.....	
Protjahsja šljax meni bez perepon.	-y
I, jak vyhnanets' - Dante, ja pokynuv,	-z
vitavsy obsyr nevidomyx lon,	-y
.....	
v tu nič moju Fl'orenciju-Vkrajinu. ³⁷	-z

Judging from the work of Klen, the only Neoclassicist who managed to escape the Soviet terror and to develop freely, one can hardly conceive of the heights which Ukrainian poetry could have reached had all of the Neoclassicists managed to survive. As it is, the Neoclassicists were able only to initiate the evolution of Ukrainian poetry into the realm of the classics of world literature. The virtuosity of form in Klen's work may indicate the greatness for which the Kievan Neoclassicists were striving in their poetic structures, and which they probably would have reached had they all been left to develop freely.

37. Ibid., vol. II, pp. 108 and 149.

CHAPTER IV

PRECISE LANGUAGE, PLASTIC IMAGES AND EPITHETS

Clear, precise and rich language

The second general and unifying characteristic of neoclassical poetry is the quality of language used in the poems. The Kievan Neoclassicists made a conscious effort to write in a language that was rich and pure and at the same time clear and precise. The reason for this stems from two sources. The first is political; the second is inherent in their classical aestheticism.

Everything that happened during the Ukrainian Renaissance of the twenties had at its core a political reason or cause. The cultural revival was a direct result of Ukraine's brief independence and the relative leniency of the Soviet government in the first decade of its existence. Neoclassicists realized that the sudden freedom to write could produce sloppy and formless verse, and therefore stressed the necessity of studying classical and classic structures of poetry. In the same way, they believed that the Ukrainian language, whose use or development in speech and literature was no longer impeded, could go astray if conscious and systematic attention were not paid to its usage and growth. Until the Ukrainian and Bolshevik Revolutions

neither in Tsarist Russia, nor in the Austro-Hungarian Empire... did the Ukrainian language have a sound basis in elementary and secondary schools, and universities, or in civic organizations or the government apparatus.

Scorned, repelled, and persecuted by the ruling cliques of Ukraine's rent lands, the Ukrainian literary language could not intensively influence the removal of dialectical divergencies.¹

The chance to develop, unify, and normalize the Ukrainian language finally came, and the Neoclassicists, scholars and academicians as well as poets, immediately responded to this difficult challenge. They stressed the importance of a unified and standardized Ukrainian language, and in their poetry and translations made a conscious effort to use the purest and most literary Ukrainian.

Their classical aestheticism, of course, also played an important role in the language of their poetry and translations. Because of their classical values they not only stressed literary Ukrainian, but strove for a language of classical precision and quality.

Classicism's principal orientation on the imminent sense of the text of a work demands of poetical language maximal clarity and precision simultaneously. This formulates a language aesthetically elevated in comparison to the general literary language or the general conversational language. This elevated language does not differ, however, from the latter structurally: not the language of gods, but the language of heroes --- precisely literary heroes. The general literary language under classicism rises to that higher level which potentially or implicitly exists in the national and dialectal language. This occurs by means of a consistent selection of words and phrases according to the criterion of clarity...²

Strangely enough, however, the Neoclassicists did not despair at the deficiency in development of the Ukrainian language. They

1. Leonid Husyn, "Najboljučiše z pytan'," Sučasnist', 2(38) (February, 1964), p. 118.

2. V. Deržavyn, "Dux i džerelo kyjivs'koho neokljasyčyzmu," Ukrajina i svit, vol. IV (February, 1951), p. 18.

saw in this lack a possibility rarely offered to languages that have reached the standard of literary development. "In developed literary languages," Zerov claimed,

previously formed phrases and formulae, because of long use, have taken on characteristics of learnedness, at times they have become worn out, and in many instances they have lost or are losing the force by which emotionally and aesthetically they influence the reader. The leading writers of such literatures are then faced with the not too easy problem of artistic activizing and renewing of expressions.³

The potentiality which the partially developed literary language afforded is what most pleased the Neoclassicists. They did not desire immediate normalization, but a regular and gradual process of formal construction of the Ukrainian literary language.⁴

They felt themselves capable, because of their scholarly, linguistical, and philological background, of undertaking this process of development, and were willing to approach the task not dogmatically, but with an earnest love, an ear, and an understanding for the language.

This sentiment is perhaps best captured by Draž-Xmara in one of his very programmatic poems:

I love those words that still ring most
and are as fragrant as old mead,
that have in boundless depths reposed
and by long, dreary years been buried.⁵

This attitude characterizes the lexicology of Draž-Xmara's poetry.

3. Mykola Zerov, Catalepton (Philadelphia: Kyjiv, 1951), p. 61.

4. Ibid., p. 62. Seeing the naïve tendencies of the twenties Zerov believed that it was too soon to normalize the Ukrainian language in the first decade after the Revolution.

5. M. Draž-Xmara, Prorosten' (Kiev: Slovo, 1926), p. 15.

Highly rewarding was his incessant search for rich, old words, those forsaken in the colloquial language and those uncultivated in the literary language because of imposed restrictions. His poetry sparkles with such lavish, lexical gems as oryflamy (banners, normally stjahy), mahala (corn, norm. kukurudza), hahary (wild ducks, norm. dyki kačky), moruha (a person with depressed looks, norm. ponura), hletčer (glacier, norm. l'odovyk), smarahdovyj (green, norm. zelenyj).

Pavlo Fylypovyč shared Draj-Xmara's love for old words which for him were like old bronze for forming new weapons:

I labor in a shop of my own words,
.....

I gladly forge upon the blaze
Those weapons from old bronze, the nimble words,
Under the ceaseless breath of winds,
An endless task, but victorious days.⁶

Fylypovyč was not as interested in resuscitating old words as was Draj-Xmara. He applied himself to the forging of words often used in order to revive and enliven them, to give them a new, wonderful ring. Some of his most successful attempts at tempering the used language brought about such beautiful and precise expressions as "I [sonce] spekoju kololo kroky" (And the [sun] splintered steps by heat), and "[Ty, sonce,] Bez žalju kyneš plomin' plazom" ([you, sun,] will throw a snaky sun ray). In the last example, in place of the regular word "polumja," "plomin'" is an excellent dialectical doublet creating a fine alliterative

6. P. Fylypovyč, Poeziji (Munich: Instytut literaturo-znavstva pry Ukrajins'komu vil'nomu universytetovi, 1957), p. 48.

sequence "plo-pla."

Jurij Klen's attitude toward language was more neoclassical than that of Draž-Xmara and Fylypovyč. Klen stressed the image of the poet-sculptor who, with words rigid and strict, carves out ever classic lines:

And you, oh poet, joining beauty,
Carve it in fretted lines,
Having given to desires and to years of duty
Your leaves engraved with words. 7

Klen himself is an excellent sculptor with words. As with structure of verse, so with language, Klen's range is very broad. For every different type of verse structure he uses an appropriate vocabulary. One finds majestic and very poetic language in his formal sonnets, lyrical language in his lyric poems, often equaling the lyricism of no less a poet, Tyčyna, grotesque language and macabre expressions in his epic Popil imperij, where he so aptly describes the Nazi and Soviet Hells. His virtuosity in language even leads him to such excellent alliterative clowning as found in the dialogue of the three witches in the fourth chapter of Popil imperij:

1-st Witch: Xurdelyt' viter u xurte^Vči
u xugu m^Včyt' čortiv xurban.
2-nd Witch: Šamrjaje, j šamotyt' v ute^Vči
i šamko šastaje šarkan.
3-rd Witch: Mij hop na patoloč^V u pa^Vlub
i v pazuxu purxne, mov špak. 8

7. Jurij Klen, Karavely (Prague: Ju, Tyšcenko Publisher, 1943), p. 53.

8. Jurij Klen, Tvory (Toronto: Jurij Klen Foundation, 1957), vol. II, p. 316.

Mykola Zerov was even more neoclassical, of course, than Klen. The flawless structure of his verses also characterizes his classic poetic diction. Perhaps the most important reason for the relatively small volume of poetry that Zerov published was his perfectionism. Zerov not only would not print a sonnet with a flaw in its structure, but he would also reject any verse containing an unsuitable or inexact word. His poetic language is characterized by a classical precision, and all of his words were thoroughly pumiced before they appeared in print. A man of great erudition, Zerov reflected his learning in his enormous, poetic vocabulary. Of all the Neoclassicists, his verses are most embellished with classical names, both mythological and historic, and contain a full array of classical allusions. Zerov's forte, however, are his epithets, which are discussed in the next section of this chapter - the precision, originality, and beauty of which would not have shamed Homer himself. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to illustrate fully the enormous vocabulary of Zerov's poetry, a vocabulary worthy in itself of a separate study. Nevertheless, one must point out that, through the lexicology of his poetry alone, Zerov managed to raise the Ukrainian literary language to that level aspired to by the Neoclassicists, a level at which the indispensable stock of the Western Graeco-Roman heritage could be incorporated and freely utilized.

Of all the Neoclassicists Zerov unquestionably made the greatest contribution in the realm of incorporating foreign (classical) vocabulary into the Ukrainian literary language. Maksym Ryl's'kyj achieved the greatest success, however, in

developing the native, the folk, Ukrainian language into a literary one. From his first appearance on the literary scene Ryl's'kyj worked persistently at purifying and crystalizing colloquial Ukrainian into literary Ukrainian, and even after his capitulation to the regime purity of language was his prime concern. Košelivec^V correctly remarks that

... probably he [Ryl's'kyj] did most for the culture of the Ukrainian language. Ryl's'kyj polished and ennobled this magic instrument of poetical creativity ..., and considered this, perhaps, as not his least duty to his national culture.⁹

In a poem which Ryl's'kyj wrote about thirty years after his neoclassicist period, he still demonstrates his preoccupation with the purity of the Ukrainian language, and this alone remains the one consistent feature of Ryl's'kyj's creative life, the one neoclassical tenet which he neither altered nor forgot.

Language

Diligently nurse your speech
As if it were a grape-vine sprout,
And always clean it of all weeds,
And keep it purer than a tear.
.....

Listen how the people speaks,
And you will hear an ocean sing
Of love and anger in its din.
You'll find no teacher wiser than the people,
For whom each word is like a pearl,
An inspiration, task, or man. 10

Both in his original works and in his numerous translations into

9. Ivan Košelivec^V, Sučasna literatura v URSS (New York: Proloh, 1964), p. 98.

10. Maksym Ryl's'kyj, Tvory v desjaty tomax (Kiev: Dvxl., 1960), vol. III, p. 211.

Ukrainian, Ryl's'kyj maintained his own directives and kept his poetic language "purer than a tear." After Ryl's'kyj became the father of Ukrainian Soviet poetry, his poetry lost much of its original greatness because of the political panegyrics which he was forced to write. Nevertheless, throughout the years the language of his works remained the guiding example of what pure literary Ukrainian should be. The young poets of today learn the standard Ukrainian language more from his poetry than from text books.

Plastic images and epithets

The Neoclassicists' desire to elevate the Ukrainian language to poetic heights was very closely connected with the frequent use of plastic images in their poetry. As plasticity in art is a classical feature, so plasticity in poetic images is a pure expression of classicism in poetry. In the works of each Neoclassicist one finds an astonishing wealth of clear, precise, and plastic images:

Zerov - U synij synjavi rohalykom okruhlym
Stav zovtyj molodyk, i nič obvodyt' uhlem

In the blue blueness, as a crescent roll
Stood a yellow new moon and with a charcoal
circled night. 11

Ryl's'kyj - Mov po blakyti ozera dzerkal'nij
Kryl'my cerkaje sonce zolotymy.

As if in the mirror-blueness of a lake
The sun dips its golden wings. 12

11. Zerov, Catalepton, p. 21.

12. Ryl's'kyj, Tvory, vol. I, p. 112.

Draj-Xmara - Za mahaloju mrije mlyn,
nemov prykolotyj metelyk.

Behind the corn a windmill dreams
as if it were a pinned butterfly. 13

Fylypovyč^V - Hroza
Na stelju neba^V čornoho byka
Zahnaly zmiji syni ta ohnjani,

Storm
Blue and fiery snakes chased
A black bull onto the ceiling of the sky.

or - Dovbala nič^V kryvave serce dnja.

The night clawed the bloody heart of day. 14

Klen - Osin'
Veselyj veresen' u lisi
Povisyv lixtari,
I sonce na zlotystim spysi
Hojdajet'sja vhorì.

Autumn
Jolly September hung
Lanterns in a forest,
And the sun on a golden spear
Rocks up above. 15

These few examples do not illustrate fully the plastic imagery of the Neoclassicists' poetry. One can only arrive at a clearer conception of the plasticity of their verse by examining their use of epithets. Through epithets the Neoclassicists managed to attain that one-word characterization, so precise and plastic, for which they always strived. Besides classical allusions the use of epithets is the feature which marks the poetry of the "Fivefold Cluster" as classicistic. For it is the epithet, as

13. Draj-Xmara, Prorosten', p. 24.

14. Fylypovyč^V, Poeziji, pp. 53 and 35.

15. Klen, Karavely, p. 62.

Pelens'kyj in his article "Ševčenko -- kljasyk" writes, that characterizes a given author's work as classicistic.¹⁶ Not only because of their classicistic predilections did the Neoclassicists use and cultivate the epithet in their poetry. For them the use of the epithet was a Ukrainian literary tradition evolving from folk songs and from such great literary works as Slovo o polku Ihorevi (The Lay of the Host of Ihor) and the various dumy (Lays) in which the epithet was very highly developed and played a prominent role in the description of characters, personifications, and imagery.

The epithet is such an important integral part in the poetry of the Neoclassicists that in some instances, as in the case of Zerov, some critics maintain that without epithets Zerov's poetry would be lifeless. In his discussion of the poetry of Zerov, Šerex devotes a sizeable portion of his work to the task of proving the above point. He claims that

in the imagery of Mykola Zerov's poetry the foremost place falls probably to the epithet. Each time the poet is capable of finding an epithet so clear and so individualized for every particular situation that the epithet alone is sufficient to have the object appear in front of the reader in all of its plasticity. ... Time and again the epithet brings into the poetry of Mykola Zerov a live soul. Read these lines:

I still love twilight _____
 Of April Evenings and _____ net
 _____ of tree tops
 And in the puddles _____ stars.
 (Twins)

16. E. Ju. Pelens'kyj, "Ševčenko -- kljasyk," Ukrajins'ka knyha, ed. E. Ju. Pelens'kyj (L'viv--Krakiv: Ukrajins'ke vydavnyctvo, 1942), No. IV, p. 75.

How lifeless! And now return the epithets to their original places....: Twilight transparent, the black net, of cherry and apple tree tops, gentle-toned stars - and you will feel the very soul of a gently transparent spring evening. And such is his whole poetry --- like thin pastels of an impressionist, like a gentle Japanese print. Or take the laconic, yet so descriptive, characteristics of the Roman poets:

But in my heart
Forever remained the unrestrained Propertius,
Courageous Ovid and multi-wise Flaccus.

Take out the epithets and you will have a dry catalogue of names, not poetry.¹⁷

Šerex's appraisal of Zerov's poetry is perhaps a little too severe, for his poetry is by no means based on epithets alone. One cannot deny, however, that the epithet occupies a very prominent place in the poetry not only of Zerov, but of all the Neoclassicists. Šerex's above description of Zerov's epithets applies equally to the use of epithets by all the Neoclassicists. Some of the most original ones are in the tradition of the Ukrainian dumy, and are formed from compound adjectives.¹⁸ Yet the simple and the compound are always chosen very carefully to evoke in the reader's mind precisely the desired shade of meaning, the desired impression, and image:

Zerov: holos nastyrlyvo-šorstkyj : a voice obtrusively-
harsh
stocvitnymy ohnjamy : by hundred-flowered fires

17. Ju. Šerex, "Poezija Mykoly Zerova," Xors, an almanac (Regensburg, 1946), 1, p. 114.

18. See Jar Slavutyc', Ševčenkova poetyka--epitet, metafora, zvukopys (Edmonton, Alberta: Slavuta Publishers, 1964), pp. 10-11 for a comparison of compound adjectives used by Ševcenko with those used by Zerov, Ryl's'kyj, and Fylypovyc'.

Kedriv moxnati lapy : Cedars' shaggy paws
 korabel' temnobokyj : the dark-sided boat
vikopomna era : an age-remembered era

Ryl's'kyj: syn'ookyj den' : blue-eyed day
zolotodzvonnj pisni : gold-ringing songs
 ajstr sniznookyx : snow-eyed asters
bezturbotnij selest : carefree rustle
 kulja hromovaja : thunderous bullet

Draj-Xmara: zlotokosa osin' : golden-braid autumn
pryv'jala tyša : withered silence
dzvinkokopytnoho konja : bell-hoofed horse
skalookyj den' : cliff-eyed day
červonokyte proso : red-tassel grain

Fylypovyč: ohnennookyj, nimyj čaklun : fiery-eyed mute
sorcerer
 mriji kryvavo-zoloti : golden-bloody dreams
nadxmarnyj viter : above-cloud wind
 pid polotnjannym nebom : under the cloth sky
korotkozoryj hruden' : near-sighted December

Klen: sp'ianilyj vyr hodyn : drunken whirlpool of hours
 korabli draĥonokryli : ships dragon-winged
jablunevyj čar : apple blossom spell
 haji midjanno-ržavi : copper-rusted groves
 osin' sovkopera : silk-feathered autumn

A separate study is required to discuss thoroughly the types and the usage of epithets in neoclassical poetry. These few examples, however, show that plasticity of image was the prime factor of a well chosen epithet.

CHAPTER V

OBJECTIVITY, UNIVERSALITY, AND AESOPIAN LANGUAGE

Poetic objectivity and lyrical universality

The desire for perfect form, pure language, and plastic imagery all stemmed from the neoclassical aesthetic belief in kalagatia. From kalagatia arises also their understanding of sophrosyne (moderation in all things), taught by the authors of antiquity.

In time of despair restrain yourself,
In moments of joy preserve your calm,

reads one of Zerov's translations of the Odes of Horace.¹ The Neoclassicists applied moderation to all things, including their own poetry, and as a result it is marked with a strong feeling of restraint and objectivity. Another origin of this poetic objectivity, the fourth unifying feature of Neoclassical poetry, lies in the subjectivity and lack of restraint of symbolist and futurist poetry. In this the Neoclassicists have as a precedent the Parnassian movement, for

as Romanticism had been originally a rebellion against pseudo-classic narrowness and aridity, so Parnassianism was to some extent a reaction against Romantic personality and exuberance... Chief among these [artistic beliefs] perhaps was the doctrine of impersonality, ... the belief that the poet should not capitalize his personal feelings and experiences, like the Romanticists, but rather, like the Classicists should generalize, should interpret universal feelings and experiences.²

1. Horace Odes ii. 3., in Mykola Zerov, Kamena (L'viv: Ukrajin's'ke vydavnyctvo, 1943), p. 65.

2. George Heely Henning, Representative French Lyrics of the

Since Symbolism can be considered Neoromanticism, the Neoclassicists reacted to it in the same way as the Parnassians did to Romanticism. In this the Neoclassicists to a certain degree correspond to the Russian movement of Acmeism which came about as a reaction to the mysticism, subjectivity, and lack of clarity of the Russian Symbolists. Poetry for the Neoclassicists was not to be an immediate reaction to an experience, full of the chaotic flamboyance of the author's emotions and ego, but an orderly expression of the author's emotions written down by an author observing, rather than doing or experiencing. In short, poetry originated when impression and emotion had passed through the process of creation whereupon they had been stripped of all their subjective emotionality; for "all poetry consists of an artistic expression of emotion, otherwise it is not poetry but prose (or with the lack of art, not poetry but hysteria)."³

Because the Kievan Neoclassicists were not a rigid poetic school, but only a group of friends who shared similar views on art and poetry, the magnitude of poetic objectivity is not the same in the works of every poet. The more neoclassical the poet, the more objective is his poetry. Although poetic objectivity can be found in the works of all the Neoclassicists, at least in some of their poems, it is predominant in the poetry of Zerov and Ryl's'kyj, the most classicistic of the five. One should point out that

Nineteenth Century (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1935), p. 240. Italics mine -- DSS.

3. V. Deržavyn, "Poezija Myxajla Oresta i neokljasyčyzm," Svitannja, No. 2 (August, 1946), p. 20. My italics -- DSS.

Ryl's'kyj, who was strongly influenced by Symbolism in his early poetry, never became a pure symbolist mainly because of the classic calm and objectivity pervading his poetry.

The poetic objectivism of the Neoclassicists precipitated the main attack on them by Soviet critics, who explained this poetic approach as a denial of existing revolutionary reality. While defending himself, Ryl's'kyj formulated an excellent definition of what he considered poetry:

When we refer to my things [poems], it is indeed strange to read in 1922-23 about fishing, calm, etc. This does not mean, however, that during the revolution I did nothing but quietly fish, but only points out one characteristic of my psychology: With a lyrical poem I can respond only to that which has passed, only to that which has "settled" in my soul and can have a clear form, characteristic of my manner. I cannot write otherwise.⁴

This "settled" recollection of the past calls to mind the very famous definition of poetry by Wordsworth:

I have said that poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity.⁵

The striking fact that a Romanticist and a Neoclassicist agree on the definition of lyrical poetry shows exactly what the Neoclassicists had in mind by objective poetry and why they desired it. It was their intention that they write poetry which would be

4. M. Ryl's'kyj, "Moja apolohija al'bo samooborona," Bil's'ovyk, No. 216 (September 25, 1923), quoted by Jurij Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrodžennja (Paris: Instytut literacki, 1959), p. 62. Italics are mine - DSS.

5. William Wordsworth, "Preface to the Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads," The College Survey of English Literature, ed. B.J. Whiting (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1947), p. 662. Italics are mine - DSS.

universal both in form and essence. Universal lyricism could be achieved only by poetry devoid of subjectivism, thus timeless, by verse in perfect form, thus universal. Only poetry which is "emotion recollected in tranquillity" or emotion "settled in the soul" can be objective and its lyricism timeless and universal in comprehension. That is the reason why the Neoclassicists, although censored, could not bring themselves to write about the immediate achievements of the Revolution, collectivization and industrialization. These themes were in direct opposition to "their aesthetic conception of 'timeless' art, which was best expressed, according to the Neoclassicists, by the classical poets and by the French Parnassians."⁶

When Pidhajnyj met Zerov on the Solovki Islands, he recorded a typical neoclassicist reaction to poetry. Pidhajnyj recited to him the following lines of Zerov's translation of Horace's ode "To Dedallus":

And we will all be there. The final moment will arrive
And the boat will drop us off, when it will be our time,
And gloomily will greet us dismal shores of endless exile.

Whereupon Zerov answered:

Yes, yes, I was always touched by these lines. This is for all epochs. This is timeless poetry.⁷

That for a Neoclassicist was the highest praise which could be paid any poetry, and it is for this highest honor that they cultivated objective poetry with universal lyricism. Moreover,

6. Svjatoslav Hordyns'kyj, ed., "Poezija Mykoly Zerova," an introduction to Mykola Zerov, Kamena (L'viv: Ukraïns'ke vydavnytvo, 1943), p. 7.

7. Semen Pidhajnyj, Ukraïns'ka inteligencija na Solovkax (Ulm: Prometej, 1947), p. 77.

unlike some of their contemporaries, the Neoclassicists were quite aware of the sentiment expressed by Horace in "I will build a monument more lasting than bronze," and well knew that a poet's immortality depends on the eternal value of his poetry, for, in the words of Fylypovych^V,

Death will not pass, and you will also perish,
But your creations will forever grow anew.⁸

Perhaps the best example of the Neoclassicists' poetic objectivity and universal lyricism can be seen in Ryl's'kyj's poem about the timeless subject of conquering love:

A Kiss

When I caught up with her in that dense thicket of the wood,
And lying in the fragrant grass, with all she could
She fought and pushed against me with resilient arms.
At last she ceased. -- How strange! Forgetting all
the harms,
The lips that had just cursed my every kin and me,
As if they were a burning flower, offered me
Their rounded goblet, brimming full with tiredness so sweet.
Her strong and shapely legs, from running, in defeat
Shone white as marble in the silent light of moon ---
And with a quiet voice, so strange and hoarse, she soon
Began to speak: Oh, ruthless, mighty, conqueror!
It was my greatest wish to lose this little war.⁹

This Alexandrine distich is a fine example of an objective treatment of the universal theme "A man chases a woman and she catches him." The author seems to be outside of the action, observing and carefully noting all the expressions and features of the girl. The impassiveness is emphasized by the slight note of humor in the conclusion of the poem. Although the author

8. P. Fylypovych, Poeziji (Munich: Instytut literaturoznavstva pry Ukrajin's'komu vil'nomu universytetovi, 1957), p. 113.

9. Maksym Ryl's'kyj, Tvory v desjaty tomax (Kiev: Dvxl., 1960), vol. I, p. 267.

vividly paints a very personal scene, he remains objective and by his impassivity brings the poem to its universal meaning: it is not the author and the girl, but a man and a girl, and, therefore, the poem becomes meaningful for all times and produces the desired emotional catharsis in all readers.

Aesopian Language

Because of their objectivity and universality, the Neoclassicists did not and could not deal with current themes in a forthright manner. As Party controls on literature tightened, the formerly mild reproaches addressed to the "Fivefold Cluster" for avoiding current issues turned into violent attacks censoring them for "bourgeois nationalistic predilections" and for intentionally avoiding Soviet reality as a protest or a denial of this reality. The official version, quoted by Lejtes and Jašek, accused the Neoclassicists of:

a) the unacceptance of revolutionary reality, a hostile fact for the bourgeois consciousness; from this stems pessimism in the bourgeois practice of art and symbolistic interpretation of the phenomena of life; b) overidealization of classical antiquity and an uncritical piety for those literary-artistic facts which have the least noticeable social antagonism or class struggle; c) principle passivity: return to the old forms of art; d) the narrowing of themes in artistic practice to the expressions and problems of an individual-philosophic-psychological nature; e) a denial, active and on principle, of utility of art.¹⁰

10. This summary of Savčenko's criticisms appears in A. Lejtes and M. Jašek, Desjat' rokov ukrajins'koji literatury (1917-1927) (Xarkiv: Deržavne vydavnyctvo Ukrajin, 1928-1930), Vol. II, p. 699.

These "'hooligan attacks' of Iakiv Savchenko, a critic who enjoyed the Party's confidence,"¹¹ besides airing the customary nonsensical harangue, are of little significance except for the first accusation - "the unacceptance of revolutionary reality." It is not by chance that this is mentioned as point a, for nothing annoyed the Soviet Party and critics more than the fact that, at the time of the country's reconstruction on communistic-socialistic lines, chief representatives of the literary intelligentsia ignored the problems of the day, and showed no willingness to unite under the Party's banner in extolling the great achievements of the Revolution. According to the communist maxim "anyone who is not with us is against us," they could permit no passivity toward the issues at hand, and therefore considered the objective and universal lyrics of the Neoclassicists as attacks of an insidious opposition.

Because it based itself on this "with or against" principle, the official criticism was incorrect. As mentioned above, the Neoclassicists, like all true poets, could reflect on emotions and experiences and transform them into poetry only after they had "settled in their soul." In their very nature, basically apolitical, and because of their desire to avoid the subjective ego of the poet in their works, they purposely shunned topical themes. When current events did "settle in their soul," however, the Neoclassicists reacted to them in their works but not directly. They tried to find universal application for their personal experiences and in this way present them as timeless expressions of the human soul.

11. George S.N. Luckyj, Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917-1934 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 54.

Šerex is correct in his opinion that the

poetry of Myk. Zerov [and of the Neoclassicists in general] exists first of all because of its conflict with reality. That is why it reflects this reality, although in its own way, generalized, not so much in individual attributes, as in synthetic images."¹²

He is also quite right in characterizing Zerov's works as, at times, an "intimate diary" of the poet's life (e.g. "ce buv desyat'litnij son" - This was but a ten year dream, a poem written upon the death of his ten year old son).¹³ And although Šerex carries his theories a little too far when he claims that the farther Zerov was removed from Neoclassicism and the closer he was in touch with reality the more his poetry approached real, live, verse,¹⁴ he makes the important observation that the poetry of Zerov and of the Neoclassicists was often "two-dimensional."¹⁵ What he means by this is, of course, that the works of the Neoclassicists made use of a technique well known to writers under any totalitarian regime, Aesopian language.

The Aesopian language, frequently used in the nineteenth century to avoid censorship, employed circumlocution and imagery which on the surface looked quite harmless, but underneath, between the lines, contained a second meaning, usually a criticism

12. Ju. Šerex, "Poezija Mykoly Zerova," Xors, an almanac (Regensburg, 1946), I, p. 120.

13. Ibid., p. 121.

14. Ibid., p. 125.

15. Ibid., p. 121.

of some prominent personage, current political event, or of the whole government. The only Neoclassicist who did not use Aesopian language in his works was Klen who did not need to do so, since all of his works were published after he emigrated from the Soviet Union. It is still, and probably always will be, an unanswered question whether the other four Neoclassicists consciously used Aesopian language, or whether those poems, discovered with a double meaning either by Soviet or émigré critics, were not written in Aesopian language at all, but were rather consciously objectivized and generalized feelings of the poets. Šerex opines that all the poems of Zerov are reflections on reality masterfully gilded by aspects of Neoclassicism. The neoclassical "symmetry of form only held in check and masked the cry of his painfully angered soul."¹⁶ The more probable explanation, however, is given by Deržavyn who clarifies the duality in the poetry of Zerov and the Neoclassicists by the statement of A. Chénier: "On new themes, let us write antique poems."¹⁷ This, however, is the Neoclassicists' use of Aesopian language. It is true that it was a part of their neoclassical creed to write according to the motto of Chénier, but it is also true that they could not express the "settled" reactions and protests to their surroundings in any other way. Perhaps the intention was not Aesopian but the resulting poems certainly were, and that is how they were finally accepted by the

16. Ibid., p. 125.

17. V. Deržavyn, "C. Leconte de Lisle i poezija francuz'koho neokljasyizmu," Ukrajina i svit, vol. II (January, 1950), p. 51.

Soviet critics. Ironically enough, the first poem that the Party critics "unmasked" was really not a poem written in the duality of Aesop, but was simply the poet's personal reaction to occurrences in his own life. The poem was Zerov's "Devjata zyma" (The Ninth Winter):

It seems this year the ninth
winter will lie...

from a conversation

Oh, how tiring the lines of Gothic letters,
How much I'd like to take a long, free breath of air!
Clear sun is up above, beyond the hills the wind,
And all around --- unmelting carpet of ninth winter's snow.
.....18

The way this innocent poem, written by Zerov as a reflection on the statement of some peasant about the ninth winter, was "unmasked" by official critics is very well summarized by Klen in his Spohady pro neokljasykiv:

The conditions in Kiev were such that even an innocent poem could be interpreted and such a meaning put into it of which the author did not even dream. Thus, I remember, how in Baryshivka one peasant told us that the winter of 1921 is probably the "ninth," and therefore the snow is very deep. This is the same as when people say that the ninth wave in the ocean is the strongest. Zerov then wrote a poem using as a motto the words of the peasant: "It seems this year the ninth winter will lie." ... Unfortunately for him, Zerov published this poem in 1926, that is, in the ninth year after the Revolution of the Proletariat, by which he gave an excuse for Panas Ljubchenko to write an invective article, in which he, as if deciphering the poem, accused Zerov of counter-revolution, claiming that the words "And all around --- unmelting carpet of ninth winter's snow" and the desire to "take a long, free breath of air" showed Zerov's desire to rebel against Soviet reality. In the Gothic letters the critic saw an inference to the revolutionary placards.

The matter was much simpler than that: Zerov and I were translating the novel of Kellerman Yester und Li, during which Zerov practiced his German. These exercises with the "Gothic letters" really tired him, and we usually went for a walk afterwards, in order to "take a long, free, breath of air" of the "ninth winter."¹⁹

Although Zerov was quite innocent of any Aesopism in this poem, he and the other Neoclassicists were branded as Aesopists, and all their subsequent works were watched and scrutinized for "between the lines" meaning. Zerov did, however, manage to write several poems in which he employed Aesopist language consciously, and which were published before this unfortunate incident, but were not unmasked by the critics. In 1924, in his only collection of verse Kamena, appeared the following poem which serves as an excellent example of the use of Aesopian language by the Neoclassicists:

Maundy Thursday

Candles and warm fumes. From the choir above
Sound songs of hopelessness and sorrow,
Around us executioners and guards,
Synedrion, and Caesar, and a Praetor.

This is our Fate's sad pattern,
The rooster's crowing is our warning sign,
For us outside a fire smolders,
Composed of servants a hierarchic chorus hums.

And a dark cycle of evangelic stories
Sounds like a series of subtle allegories
About our base and avaricious times.

Outside the door, in the cemetery and the yard
There's sound of bells, and children's voices -- Spring,
And in the moist air shine moist stars.²⁰

19. Jurij Klen, Ivory (Toronto: Jurij Klen Foundation, 1957), vol. III, pp. 120-121.

20. M. Zerov, Kamena, p. 31. My version of this sonnet is in prose because precision and authenticity of meaning is the prime object of this translation.

It is not known whether this poem's second meaning went unnoticed because 1924 was still too soon to force upon the writers full Party control, or because the church setting of the poem made it inconspicuous to the anti-religious Party critics, or, eventually, because the critics were unfamiliar with many of Zerov's words and could not attribute any meaning to the poem without revealing their ignorance. That the poem is a definite masked criticism of the "base and avaricious times" is unquestionable. This idea was supported even by Klen who was with Zerov when he wrote the poem in Baryšivka.²¹

Official criticism never noticed the following poem of Ryl's'kyj, contained in Kriz' burju i snih in 1925, which is, however, no longer included in his later collected works. After Ryl's'kyj's recantation and denial of the Neoclassicists, in all probability he was obliged to disclaim the validity of this little poem written in Aesopian language:

Again that Sphinx, again awaits a puzzle...
For iron snakes crawl over steppes,
And quick-witted Dedallus' heir
Floats like a hundred-eyed rapacious bird.

Man, you walk on. The torches shine
But haze grows darker none the less...
Oh, modern Oedipus, did Moira predestine, too,
Blind wanderings for you?²²

Less fortunate with his poem "Swans" was Draž-Xmara. Although, by the poet's own account, he was quite innocent and had no Aesopian intentions, he was unfortunate to publish his sonnet

21. Klen, Ivory, vol. III, p. 119.

22. Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrodžennja, p. 87 provides the original.

in 1929, three years after Zerov's "Ninth Winter," and therefore official critics, watching for anything even remotely suspicious, "exposed" Draž-Xmara's poem as counter-revolutionary.

Swans

Upon the lake with winds through willows singing
They lingered in captivity till fall
They stately swam; their curving necks had all
The grace of reeds the stormy wind is swinging.

But when sonorous crystal frosts came ringing
And water froze under a dream-white pall,
They leaped to flight out of that frigid stall
And feared no threats of winter to their winging.

O Five unconquered, though the cold be long,
No snow can muffle your triumphant song
Which breaks the ice of small despairs and fears:

Rise, swans, and higher to bright Lyra homing
Pierce through the night of servitude to spheres
Where, all intense, the sea of life is foaming.²³

The official criticism of this sonnet by the Party critic Mykola Novytskyj went as follows:

The sonnet was written, as we can see, so-so. Had the poem appeared twenty-five years ago, when "in captivity" were the workers and peasants, then the poem would be in our line of thought. We would then only remark to the author, that, sympathizing with his desire to "pierce," we do not suggest turning the attention of the captives to the "bright Lyre" and to rely on "triumphant songs" (singing societies), because for the workers there is a better way to leave the "night of servitude": That is — organized class struggle and the preparation for definite revolutionary battles. But the poem, (an imitation of Mallarmé, in the words of the author), appears in Ukrainian literature not twenty-five years ago, but today, when the feelings "small despairs and fears," pain and sadness of wings frozen in the ice, are in no way familiar to the proletarian conqueror, who is occupied with other feelings and practical matters. True, there are elements on our soil "captivated" (by the dictatorship of the proletariat); and these elements have reasons for "small despairs and fears";

23. This translation was done by Oksana Asher, A Ukrainian Poet in the Soviet Union (New York: Svoboda, 1959), p. 35.

they also have singers, and "fivefold clusters" and even some "piercers." Perhaps for them the feelings of the "Swans" would be melodious, but for us it is a foreign tongue, and foreign feelings. That is why, perhaps, this murmur has gone by unnoticed. And the reader has become unaccustomed to allegories.²⁴

Such criticism left no doubt as to what group Draj-Xmara and the Neoclassicists belonged. All explanations and recantations were of no avail. The Neoclassicists were prejudged enemies and had to be destroyed. The "Swans" was Draj-Xmara's last published poem. For that matter, "neither M. Zerov, nor P. Fylypovyč^V could have their poems published, and after five years they were exiled to the Solovki Islands at the time that Draj-Xmara was dispatched to Kolyma. Oswald Burghardt crossed the border in 1931 and became Jurij Klen, and Maksym Ryl's'kyj definitely severed his ties with this group of poets."²⁵ Thus this last attempt at Aesopian language, this "swan" song, was the last song of the "Fivefold Cluster" of the Kievan Neoclassicists.

24. Mykola Novyc'kyj, "Na jarmarku," quoted by V. Pors'kyj, "Lebedynyj spiv," Kyjiv, I (January-February, 1951), p. 35.

25. Ibid., p. 38.

CHAPTER VI

AWAY FROM MOSCOW

No study of the Neoclassicists, nor of any other group of poets of the Ukrainian Renaissance, can be complete without at least a brief discussion of the role which they played in The Literary Discussion of 1925-1928. One should understand that everything related to the National Revival was in one way or another involved in the politics of the time; thus The Literary Discussion, perhaps the most significant literary event of the twenties in Ukraine, was also very much a political affair. Although the prime question debated during The Literary Discussion was the one concerning the direction in which Ukrainian literature should proceed, the side issues of The Literary Discussion, centering around the issue of Party control, were political. In short, the political allegiance of the authors participating in The Literary Discussion was the key factor in determining the two sides: the protagonists of the independent development of a national Ukrainian culture rallied around Zerov and Xvyl'ovyj, and the authors who supported the Party's view arrayed themselves behind Andrij Xvylja and Mykola Skrypnyk.¹ Politics in The Literary Discussion was so significant that The Discussion "is

1. This division follows George S.N. Luckyj, Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917-1934 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 93.

usually divided into three stages corresponding to the course of Party policy in literature: I. April, 1925 - September, 1926; II. October, 1926 - December, 1927; III. January, 1928 - February 21, 1928."²

The Neoclassicists, an unorganized, apolitical group, did not, as a unit, participate in the debates of The Literary Discussion, but were represented by a maître and spokesman, Zerov. Zerov actively supported the ideas of Xvyl'ovyj, the initiator and principal figure of The Discussion.

Mykola Xvyl'ovyj (pseudonym of M. Fityl'ov) was born in 1893 in the District of Slobožan^Vščyna. He was a poet, a prosaist, and pamphleteer. In the vast store of poetry written in the twenties his two collections, Molodist' (Youth), 1921, and Dos'vitni symfoniji (Dawn Symphonies), 1922, went unnoticed. Nevertheless, he achieved immediate fame through his first collection of short stories, Syni etjudy (Blue Etudes), 1923. A second collection Osin' (Autumn), 1924, and the unfinished novel Val'dšnepy (Woodsnipes), 1927, complete his creative prose and establish him as "one of the most outstanding writers of the proletarian age."³ Xvyl'ovyj rose to fame and notoriety, however, mostly because of his pamphlets Kamo hrjadesy? (Whither Art Thou Going?), 1925, Dumky proty tečiji (Thoughts Against the Current), 1926, Apolohety pysaryzmu (The

2. Ibid., p. 93. For further reference see footnotes 7 and 8, Luckyj, p. 93. My italics - DSS.

3. Ol. Doroškevyc^V, Pidručnyk istoriji ukrajins'koji literatury (Kiev: Knyhospilka, 1927), p. 304.

Apologians of Scribbling), 1926, Ukrajina čy Malorosija? (Ukraine or Little Russia?), 1927. Apart from his writing career, Xvyl'ovyj founded and ideologically inspired the organization VAPLITE (Vil'na Akademija Proletars'koji Literaturny - The Free Academy of Proletarian Literature), the journal Literaturnyj jarmarok (Literary Market), and the movement Prolitfront (Proletars'kyj literaturnyj front - The Proletarian Literary Front).

Xvyl'ovyj was a communist by conviction, and hailed the Revolution in Ukraine not only as a social, but also as a national, liberation. Communism for him was a set of social and economic beliefs which did not deny or interfere with his nationalistic aspirations. He was and remained a Ukrainian despite his communistic views. Unfortunately, Xvyl'ovyj soon realized that the CP(B)U, directed by Moscow, did not desire the establishment of an autonomous national Ukrainian communist state, but a return of Ukraine to the formal prerevolutionary status of total subordination to Moscow, no longer "White," but "Red." Xvyl'ovyj, disillusioned by the results of the Revolution in Ukraine and by its Communist Party, was faced with the dilemma of reconciling his double self: the Ukrainian and the Communist. Theoretically the two could be united into one, but in practice Xvyl'ovyj realized that the former precluded the latter and vice versa. Since Ukrainization in literature was also failing, Xvyl'ovyj decided that the only way to reconcile and unite the Ukrainian and the Communist was for Ukraine to break away from Moscow. This idea finally forced Xvyl'ovyj to choose the one-way path which led him to his doom. In a series of bold articles Xvyl'ovyj

initiated what later became known as The Literary Discussion. For the Ukrainian writers he painted an accurate picture of the situation, and revealed the dilemma engulfing them. First he asked the pertinent question: Where Are You Going? and then he charted the path to follow: Toward Europe, away from Moscow! Away from local ethnographism (Pros'vita)!

Xvyl'ovyj's audacity led him to commit suicide on May 13, 1933.⁴ The other writers were given a final opportunity to express their views freely, and thus revealed to the Party the identity of those who opposed its policies, those who were to be liquidated when the time came. Nonetheless The Literary Discussion, begun by Xvyl'ovyj, remains one of the most important achievements of the Ukrainian Revival, the final, open manifestation of its spirit.

Xvyl'ovyj's call to Europe was by no means original. It was inherent in the whole spirit of the cultural revival in Ukraine, and, as such, was pronounced at the very beginning of the Renaissance. In one of the earliest manifestos on art, the talented director of the Molodyj Teatr (Young Theater), Les' Kurbas, in 1917 stated:

After a long epoch of Ukrainophilism, romantic admiration for the kozaks, ethnographism, and modernism based on Russian patterns, we see in our literature, which has hitherto reflected all social moods, a vital and most important turning point. It is directed straight toward Europe ... Without any intermediaries or authoritative

4. For fuller biographical data on Xvyl'ovyj see: Luckyj, Literary Politics, and Ju. Luc'kyj, ed., Lehkosynja dal' -- vaplitjans'kyj zbirnyk (New York: Proloh, 1963).

models. This is the only true path for our art.⁵

Moreover, Zerov and the Neoclassicists voiced the same idea from the moment of their existence. The first point of their three-fold creed was an exhortation to Ukrainian writers to assimilate the best in the West European heritage. In 1921 Zerov's sonnet "Moloda Ukraïna" (Young Ukraine) ended in a directive calling for Ukraine to follow Leconte de Lisle and Hérédia, to turn toward Europe.

It is no wonder that Zerov eagerly supported Xvyl'ovyj in the Literary Discussion, for Xvyl'ovyj was proclaiming ideas in which the Neoclassicists, especially Zerov, had long believed. As Šerex rightfully remarked, "... Many of the ideas of Myk. Zerov (orientation toward Europe, turning to the sources) became known to the masses as ideas of Xvyl'ovyj"⁶ who proclaimed them with the zeal of a missionary.

The Neoclassicists' part in The Literary Discussion was very important, for the discussion centered on their ideas then propagated by Xvyl'ovyj. Xvyl'ovyj's originality, however, was not denied because he was voicing ideas inherent in the Revival and in the Neoclassicists' creed. Xvyl'ovyj's original contribution lay in the fact that he was the first to dare to pinpoint exactly what was meant by the call "toward Europe without any intermediaries."

5. Robitnyča hazeta, September 23, 1917, quoted in Luckyj, Literary Politics, p. 26.

6. Ju. Šerex, "Poezija Mykoly Zerova," Xors, an almanac (Regensburg, 1946), I, p. 126.

His audacious call "Away From Moscow!" at a time when Ukrainian Literature still retained some autonomy, "coming from a Communist, was a dangerous heresy in the eyes of the Kremlin, the citadel of Russian Communist centralism."⁷ Xvyl'ovyj was attacked from all sides. At first he was questioned about Europe, and later the following charge was addressed to him: Did he advocate imitating the old, decadent, bourgeois Europe of capitalism? During this period of The Literary Discussion Zerov, in the name of the Neoclassicists, willingly supported Xvyl'ovyj on this issue, and defended his views by clarifying the concept of Xvyl'ovyj's Europe. During The Literary Dispute in Kiev on May 24, 1925, Zerov argued:

... If we examine the first published article [of Xvyl'ovyj], nowhere in it will we find that by the term Europe he understands the street novel... The general tone of the article permits us to state that least of all is he thinking of this Europe when he speaks of Europe as of a panacea for our literary wounds. ... Europe in the article of Xvyl'ovyj is the Symbol of a strong cultural tradition, severe competition in life, severe choice in the realm of culture. ... Xvyl'ovyj's Europe stands for a trampoline which will help us reach a higher level of cultural creativity, which will provide us with a method to raise our "own qualifications." ... Europe should be understood as a school which will raise to great heights our artistic technology, which will create from our creativity a mighty stream of the cultured word, a stream which will force the splinters and dirt of graphomania to the top.⁸

Zerov clarified his position and that of the Neoclassicists when he finally formulated the three points of the Neoclassicists'

7. Luckyj, Literary Politics, p. 94.

8. M. Zerov in a speech given at the Kievan Literary Dispute on May 24, 1925, A. Lejtes and M. Jasek, Desjat' rokov ukrajins'koji literatury (1917-1927) (Xarkiv: Derzavne vydavnytvo Ukrajin, 1928-1930), vol. II, p. 185. For the complete speech see pp. 184-188.

creed, and expressed union of purpose with Xvyl'ovyj:

We must not avoid ancient or even feudal Europe. Let us not fear that it will contaminate us (who knows, perhaps it is better for the proletarian to become infested with class determinants of a West-European bourgeois, than with the nervelessness of a penitent Russian patrician), but let us assimilate the sources of European culture, for we must know them in order not to remain forever provincials. And to Xvyl'ovyj's "Whither Art Thou Going?" addressed to our youth, let us answer: "Ad fontes!" that is, to the original sources, to the roots.⁹

Xvyl'ovyj willingly accepted Zerov's support and, although many differences still separated them, they became partners in The Literary Discussion. Xvyl'ovyj wrote of Europe as the Faustian spirit of endless quest, and proclaimed Zerov the one who knew this Europe, who knew the sources, and who must lead Ukrainian literature to them. He proclaimed the oncoming "Asiatic Renaissance,"¹⁰ and declared that Neoclassicism was indispensable to its coming:

The Zerovs have sensed the smell of our epoch and realized that new art must turn to the examples, the culture of antiquity. The Asiatic renaissance is the epoch of European renaissance plus the unsurpassed, cheerful, and joyful Graeco-Roman art. It is not surprising that even in bourgeois France Neoclassicism appeared not so long ago. For the romanticism of vitajism [the -ism of life and regeneration] Neoclassicism is as necessary as the very belief in the truth of the great Asiatic renaissance.¹¹

9. M. Zerov, Do džerel (L'viv: Ukrajins'ke vydavnyctvo, 1943), pp. 261-262.

10. Xvyl'ovyj's "Asiatic Renaissance" is a rather involved concept and cannot be discussed more thoroughly in this thesis. It is treated more fully in Luckyj, Literary Politics, pp. 95-101.

11. M. Xvyl'ovyj, Kamo hrjadesy? quoted in Jurij Lavrinenko, Rozstriljane vidrodžennja (Paris: Instytut literacki, 1959), pp. 798-811. This quotation is cited from p. 810.

Despite Zerov's stand at the side of Xvyl'ovyj on the question of turning to Europe, to the sources of culture, and on the question of avoiding any intermediary influence from Moscow, the critic and poet Dmytro Zahul in his article of 1926, "Literatura ^Vcy literatur^{VV}sčyna?" (Literature or Literaturism?),¹² accuses Zerov and the Neoclassicists of being nothing more than copyists and their "school" nothing but an echo of the Russian neoclassical movement. The main points of his accusation were: Neoclassical literature is a "literature of stubborn, standard style of past times, a literature of imitations, reworkings, translations, recantations, not creativity but fabrication, not style but stylization...;" and that "Ukrainian Neoclassicism is a provincial echo of the appearance of Russian Neoclassicism."¹³

In the light of the Neoclassical creed and the participation of the Neoclassicists in The Literary Discussion on the side of Xvyl'ovyj, Zahul's accusation that they were only imitators of Russian Neoclassicism seems ridiculous. Zahul's faulty accusation stems from his regarding 1922-23 as the date of the appearance of Ukrainian Neoclassicists; this coincides with the formation of the Russian Neoclassical group "Liričeskij krug"

12. Since it was impossible to obtain a copy of this article, the knowledge of its content is derived only from secondary sources where parts of it were quoted: Introduction to M. Zerov, Do džerel and Ju. Serex, Xors.

13. Introduction to M. Zerov, Do džerel, p. 10.

(The Lyrical Circle) in Moscow.¹⁴ The insignificance of this group¹⁵ and Zahul's anachronistic dating of the Neoclassicists demonstrate the falseness of his accusation and suggest that Zahul was accusing not from conviction, but under Party directives which sought to discredit the Neoclassicists.¹⁶

Zerov himself, in an article written in response to Zahul, "Naši literaturoznavci i polemisty" (Our Litterateurs and Polemicists),¹⁷ refutes Zahul's accusations:

The basic trine against which Zahul directs his worst thunders was prominent already in 1919, and it formed itself "without any outside influence," long before knowledge of Abram Efrom, and Varv. Butjagina, whom Zahul forces on the "neoclassicists" as godfathers.¹⁸

14. The two sources in which this group is mentioned disagree as to the place where the group originated. According to Jaroslav Hordyns'kyj, Literaturna krytyka pidsov'jec'koji Ukrajinj (L'viv: Mazepyns'ka Akademijia Nauk, 1939), p. 15, the group originated in Moscow. However, according to Svjatoslav Hordyns'kyj, "Poezija Mykoly Zerova," an introduction to M. Zerov, Kamena (L'viv: Ukrajin's'ke vydavnyctvo, 1943), p. 6, the group originated in Petersburg. The author is prone to accept the former version because Ja. Hordyns'kyj's book is considered very authoritative: see Luckyj, Literary Politics, p. 28, note No. 9.

15. The group was so insignificant that such authoritative sources on Russian Literature of that period as Renato Poggioli, The Poets of Russia, 1890-1930 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960); Gleb Struve, Soviet Russian Literature 1917-1950 (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma, 1951); and D.S. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, Contemporary Russian Literature (New York: A. Knopf, 1926), do not even mention it.

16. Introduction to M. Zerov, Do džerel, p. 10.

17. This article appeared in Červonyj Šljax, No. 4, 1926. The author, however, was unable to obtain a copy of this article and therefore is forced to requote a secondary source: Introduction to M. Zerov, Do džerel.

18. Ibid., p. 10.

Zerov repeats his explanation of the meaning of the Neoclassical "group" and provides further reasons why Zahul's accusation is groundless:

Allowing enough space for each other, they [the Neoclassicists] never constructed a rigid framework for all. Without differentiating they translated the "iron sonnets" of German proletarian poetry, of the ancient Romans, of the Polish Romanticists, and ... they are equally familiar with hexametre, octaves, four-foot iambs, and free verse. That is why, in spite of the authoritative opinion of Zahul, they will never subscribe to point (2) of the manifesto of the Russian Neoclassicists, and will never say that they base their creativity "on the basis of pure classicism." That is why they prefer to put the appellation "neoclassicists" into quotation marks, and they will never agree with D. Zahul that art "exists for art's sake" and that "classical literature is the alpha and omega of all artistic achievement." The Neoclassicists believe that the Greek and Roman writers can be of value in the creation of a "great style," but they will never consider that the ancient authors are all there is in the world...¹⁹

It is interesting to note that current Soviet criticism agrees more with the opinion expressed by Zerov than by Zahul, at least on the point that Russian Neoclassicism was of too little importance to have influenced the Ukrainian movement:

The Ukrainian current of Neoclassicism was much more prominent than the Neoclassicism in Russian poetry, where it only crossed the literary horizon and left no trace in its wake.²⁰

Had Zahul accused the Kievan Neoclassicists of being nothing but a Ukrainian copy of Russian Acmeism his accusation would have been more plausible. Nonetheless, in this case his accusation would still have been incorrect. Even though Struve claims that

19. Ibid., p. 10.

20. S.A. Kryžanivs'kyj, Maksym Ryl's'kyj --- 50-t' rokiv tvorčoji dijal'nosti (Kiev: Dvxl., 1960), p. 18.

Received of the Hon. the Secretary of the Treasury, the sum of \$100.00
for the purchase of the land of the late John Smith, deceased, and
for the purchase of the land of the late John Smith, deceased.

Witness my hand and the seal of the Treasury, this 1st day of January, 1864.
J. M. Smith, Secretary of the Treasury.

Attest: J. M. Smith, Secretary of the Treasury.

Witness my hand and the seal of the Treasury, this 1st day of January, 1864.

Attest: J. M. Smith, Secretary of the Treasury.

Witness my hand and the seal of the Treasury, this 1st day of January, 1864.

"Acmeism ... may be conveniently characterized as modern Neoclassicism,"²¹ the Acmeists never referred to themselves as such, and Mirsky's definition of Acmeism as Neorealism seems more credible:

It [Acmeism] was started in 1912 by Gorodetsky and Gumil'ev as a reaction against the Symbolist attitude. They refused to regard things as mere signs of other things. "We want to admire a rose," they said, "because it is beautiful, not because it is a symbol of mystical purity." ... Their doctrine was a new realism, but a realism particularly alive to the concrete individuality of things. They tried to avoid the pitfalls of aestheticism and proclaimed as their masters (a queer set) Villon, Rabelais, Shakespeare, and Théophile Gautier.²²

The qualities they sought in a poet, "visual vividness, emotional intensity, and verbal freshness,"²³ were similar to those demanded of a poet by the Neoclassicists. Nevertheless, although their desire for plasticity and concreteness equalled that of the Neoclassicists, the poetry of the two groups differs considerably primarily because there is no similarity in the reasons for the existence of the two. Acmeism came about largely as a revolt against the attitudes of the Symbolists, and as such reflected in its poetry essentially a desire to give concrete substance to the ephemeral verse of the Symbolists. Kievan Neoclassicism originated not as a revolt against Symbolism, but as a leveling and stabilizing force in time of literary chaos. Its prime aim was the culturalization of reborn Ukrainian literature and its formulation on West European models. The poetry of the Neoclas-

21. Struve, Soviet Russian Literature, p. 4.

22. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, Contemporary Russian Literature, p.253.

23. Ibid., p. 254.

sicists is therefore not only plastic and concrete, but also educational, in the sense that it was often written with a conscious desire to broaden Ukrainian literary horizons in both theme and form.

Of the three most prominent Acmeists, Nikolaj Gumilëv (1886-1921), Anna Axmatova (pseudonym of Anna Gorenko, 1888--), and Osip Mandel'stam (1891-1940?), only Mandel'stam is akin to the Neoclassicists. For while Gumilëv, "the poet-warrior,"²⁴ wrote his exotic verses about Africa, adventure, and heroes, almost as if he were a Russian Kipling,²⁵ and while Axmatova, "the poetess of tragic love,"²⁶ in the tradition of Sapho, Elizabeth B. Browning, and Emily Dickinson,²⁷ sang her personal and melancholy story of love, Mandel'stam, "the architect of the word,"²⁸ spoke, almost like Zerov, on literary and artistic subjects.

Dickens, Ossian, Bach, Notre Dame, St. Sophia, Homer's catalogue of ships, Racine's Phèdre, a Lutheran burial, are among his characteristic subjects. All this is not introduced merely for decorative purposes, after the manner of Bryusov, nor treated as symbols of some Ens Realius as they would have been by Ivanov, but with a genuine historical and critical penetration as individual phenomena with a well-defined place in the current history. Mandelstam's diction attains sometimes

24. An appellation given to Gumilëv by Leonid I. Strakhovsky, Craftsmen of the Word --- Three Poets of Modern Russia: Gumilyov, Akhmatova, Mandelstam (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1949).

25. Poggioli, The Poets of Russia, p. 225.

26. An appellation given to Axmatova by Strakhovsky.

27. Poggioli, pp. 231-232.

28. An appellation given to Mandel'stam by Strakhovsky.

to a splendid "Latin" sonority which is unrivalled by any Russian poet since Lomonosov. But what is essential in his poetry ... is his form, and his manner of laying stress on it and making it felt.²⁹

Mirsky's description of Mandel'stam's work could be used with few changes to describe the poetry of Zerov. Nonetheless, although there is so much similarity between these two poets, and although they probably knew of each other, or rather, Zerov probably knew of Mandel'stam, there is no direct evidence that the latter influenced the former in any way. There is, moreover, no reason to believe that the Russian Acmeists, or, for that matter, the Russian Neoclassicists, had any influence whatsoever on the Ukrainian Neoclassicists, when one considers the attitude taken by the latter in The Literary Discussion, an attitude expressing a desire to seek models directly, without any intermediaries, at the sources, in the culture of antiquity and Western Europe.

29. Mirsky, Contemporary Russian Literature, p. 259.

* * *

This thesis has been an attempt to introduce the scholar of Ukrainian literature outside Ukraine to the very important group of poets, the Kievan Neoclassicists. It is hoped that their importance has become apparent to the reader. He must realize, however, that the importance of a study of the Neoclassicists lies not only in the fact that these poets made the most significant contribution to the elevation of the standard of Ukrainian literature and its Westernization, but also in the fact that these poets cannot be studied in Soviet Ukraine. All efforts, therefore, must be made to make all the information about the Ukrainian Neoclassicists accessible to scholars of Ukrainian literature outside Ukraine. The scope of this thesis is not large enough to do full justice to the Neoclassicists, and this writer is aware that further study should be made of the works of the Neoclassicists individually, of their versification, vocabulary, and themes. Nonetheless, one hopes that this thesis has provided at least a general and concise outline of the enormous and important wealth of material afforded by the Ukrainian movement of Neoclassicism and its exponents, the Kievan Neoclassicists.

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1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1801.

2. The second part is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 10, 1801.

3. The third part is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 10, 1801.

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